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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Emergency assistance to the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 52/169 F of 16 December 1997 on emergency assistance to the Sudan, the General Assembly, *inter alia*, noting the declining contributions to the 1997 United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for Operation Lifeline Sudan despite progress made in the Operation, and noting also that considerable relief needs still remained to be addressed, in particular in the areas of non-food assistance, acknowledged with appreciation the cooperation by the Government of the Sudan with the United Nations and encouraged that cooperation. The Assembly stressed the need for Operation Lifeline Sudan to be operated with a view to ensuring its efficiency, transparency and effectiveness, with the full participation of the Government of the Sudan in its management and operation. The Assembly took note of and was encouraged by the signing in April 1997 of the Peace Agreement between the Government of the Sudan and many factions of the rebel movement for the achievement of peace in the Sudan as well as by the joint announcement by the Government and the remaining faction of the rebel movement that they were engaged in peace talks. The Assembly stressed also the importance of assuring safe access for personnel providing relief assistance to all in need, and the importance of strict observance of the principles and guidelines of Operation Lifeline Sudan. In that connection, the Assembly urged all parties involved to continue to offer all feasible assistance, including facilitating the movement of relief supplies and personnel, so as to guarantee maximum success of Operation Lifeline Sudan in all affected parts of the country.

2. In the same resolution, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to mobilize and coordinate resources and support for Operation Lifeline Sudan and to report on the emergency situation in the affected areas and on the recovery, rehabilitation and development of the country to the Assembly at its fifty-third session. The present report has been prepared in response to that request and covers the period from October 1997 to July 1998.

II. Current situation in the Sudan

3. The combination of a two-year drought, erratic rainfall and intensified conflict produced the Sudan's most serious humanitarian crisis in a decade. During the first two quarters of 1998, with pre-famine conditions developing into famine, hundreds of thousands of Sudanese civilians crossed the threshold from subsistence to starvation. By the end of the reporting period, an estimated 2.6 million people required emergency food assistance. Of these, the majority were women and children. Although United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) had launched the largest humanitarian operation in the history of Operation Lifeline Sudan, questions remained regarding the time it would take to stabilize the situation and whether sufficient financial resources could be mobilized to sustain life-saving interventions.

4. The outbreak of renewed hostilities in January 1998 was the catalyst for the crisis. Despite calls from members of the international community for a ceasefire, fighting among the parties continued throughout the first half of 1998, particularly in northern Bahr Al Ghazal, Blue Nile State and along the Eritrean border in Gederaf and Kassala states. While efforts to find peaceful solutions to the ongoing civil conflict in the Sudan gained momentum during two rounds of negotiations under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), no ceasefire had been agreed to by the end of June 1998.

5. Although United Nations agencies had warned during the last reporting period, and again in November 1997 in the Operation Lifeline Sudan annual needs assessments, that the onset of a life-threatening, uncontrollable humanitarian disaster was likely, donor contributions were so low during 1997 that several programme interventions were either curtailed or stopped and pre-positioning of key commodities including food stocks in the forward staging base of Lokichokio was difficult.

6. The reduced capacity of Operation Lifeline Sudan was disappointing in the light of significant improvements granted in access by the Government of the Sudan in the period from July 1997 to January 1998. Beginning in July 1997, after the first mission of the new Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs to the Sudan, Robert van Schaik, the number of access denials declined significantly. The average monthly flight denials by the Government of the Sudan dropped from 17 per month to 7 and all requests for barges were approved. This pattern continued until January 1998 when Kerubino Kwanyin Bol defected to the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and attacks were launched against the Government-controlled towns of Wau, Aweil and Gogrial in Bahr Al Ghazal.

7. The Government responded to these attacks by imposing a total flight ban over the entire region of Bahr Al Ghazal. The ban paralysed virtually all relief operations in this isolated area which is generally accessible only by air. After numerous high-level interventions by United Nations agencies, the ban was partially lifted in late February 1998

when six locations were cleared during an emergency mission by the Special Envoy and again in mid-March when two further locations were approved. In its efforts to lift the ban, the United Nations was strongly supported by a number of Member States. When full access was finally granted on 30 March, it was estimated that more than 350,000 persons in rebel-controlled areas of Bahr Al Ghazal and 30,000 in Government-controlled areas were suffering from serious hunger. By the end of May, this number had been revised upwards to 595,000 in rebel-held areas and 33,000 in Government-controlled areas. By mid-July, after comprehensive assessments, including nutritional and food economy surveys, had been conducted, the number of people in need of food assistance in rebel-held areas had climbed to 701,000 and in Government-controlled areas to approximately 78,000. Nutritional surveys showed that global malnutrition rates had risen to as high as 62 per cent in certain areas of Bahr Al Ghazal.

8. The increase in beneficiaries was attributable in large part to the continual breakdown of community structures and individual coping mechanisms which had begun before the flight ban and which accelerated subsequently owing to the stress on resources created by the displacement of more than 110,000 persons from Government-controlled areas of Bahr Al Ghazal following the January 1998 attack. Communities which had been barely able to cope prior to the ban crossed the threshold into food deficit as they shared their meagre resources with newly displaced. Compounding the problem was an erosion of community resilience after more than four years of military campaigns which had left communities bereft of assets, without shelter and unable to cultivate food crops.

9. Once access was granted, the Organization's early response was hampered by logistical constraints and lack of food. Although the World Food Programme (WFP) took immediate steps to divert food stocks from regional depots and requested a second C-130 aircraft which was approved within one week by the Government, it was not until early May 1998 that the magnitude of humanitarian need could be confirmed through rapid assessments. Government approval in early May of WFP requests for five C-130 heavy-cargo aircraft and three Buffalo planes ensured that the United Nations agencies had sufficient logistical capacity to intervene in Bahr Al Ghazal on the scale needed to begin to stabilize the situation.

10. United Nations agencies quickly realized, however, that the Operation Lifeline Sudan forward staging base in Lokichokio was too small to support the heavy-cargo aircraft required to mount a full-scale operation into southern Sudan. During a mission by the Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator (Designate) of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Operation Lifeline Sudan agreed to open a second logistics base in the Government-controlled town of Al Obeid located north of the transitional zone. On 6 June 1998, the base became operational with one C-130 airdropping food into northern Bahr Al Ghazal. By the end of June, after further reassessments, WFP confirmed that 13 cargo aircraft would be required to meet urgent needs in southern Sudan until the end of the hunger gap in October. Government approval for the full WFP fleet was granted in early July. United Nations efforts to meet the crisis were bolstered in early June with the resumption of humanitarian activities by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which had suspended operations in the Sudan in November 1996 following a hostage-taking incident in Bahr Al Ghazal.

11. Although the humanitarian situation in Bahr Al Ghazal was on a scale unseen in southern Sudan for more than a decade, other areas of the South and the transitional zone also experienced pre-famine conditions during the first half of 1998. In virtually all cases, the decline in humanitarian conditions was linked to military action. Some of the highest malnutrition rates ever recorded by Operation Lifeline Sudan were reported in Government-controlled areas of Unity State including Bentiu and Rubkona. Malnutrition rates were also very high in rebel-held areas of western Upper Nile where constant insecurity prevented a full engagement by Operation Lifeline Sudan. In the Government-controlled towns of Torit and Terekeka in eastern Equatoria, global malnutrition rates topped 30 per cent. In the rebel-held areas of the Lopit mountains and pockets in Juba county, conditions similar to those found in Bahr Al Ghazal were reported.

12. In the transitional zone, Meiram and Abyei received influxes of internally displaced persons (IDPs) fleeing insecurity in Bahr Al Ghazal. Tensions also erupted after the attack on Wau between the Reizegat and Dinka tribes in the Ad Daein displaced camps, forcing thousands of IDPs to flee their camps. In Kassala, more than 20,000 IDPs fled from the front line seeking safe haven and emergency assistance.

13. Insecurity continued to hamper relief operations throughout the reporting period. In the most serious incident affecting humanitarian personnel, two WFP staff and one Sudanese Red Crescent Society worker were shot and killed during an ambush following a food distribution in Government-held areas of the Nuba mountains on 9 June. Two staff from the Sudanese Red Crescent Society were also injured during the attack. The United Nations denounced the killings and called upon all parties to allow safe passage for humanitarian personnel. In the 11-month period between

August 1997 and June 1998, over 200 relief personnel were evacuated from 37 locations. Raiding by militia and regular troops intensified after the January 1998 attacks, forcing thousands of internally displaced civilians to seek safe haven. Indiscriminate bombing by the Government in areas inhabited by civilian populations, including those concentrated at Bahr Al Ghazal distribution points, was reported on 31 separate occasions during the period.

14. The consolidation of the Southern States Coordination Council (SSCC) under the presidency of Riak Machar, the former rebel leader of the South Sudan Independence Army/ Movement (SSIA/M) who signed a peace agreement with the Government in April 1997, was still in process at the end of the reporting period. However, the status of the Relief Association of South Sudan (RASS), the humanitarian wing of the SSIM, remained unclear, making it difficult to coordinate interventions in areas under its control. Relief operations in areas in western Upper Nile under the control of SSIA/M were further hampered by internal fighting and a split within the movement which occurred during the first quarter of 1998.

15. The efforts of Operation Lifeline Sudan to address the humanitarian crisis were boosted by a series of donor contributions in April, May and June 1998 which raised the amount contributed against the 1998 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal from approximately 10 per cent of US$ 109.4 million in March to more than 50 per cent by the end of June. Both the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WFP increased the amount appealed for as the magnitude of the crisis became clear and operations expanded.

16. Efforts to coordinate the international response to the crisis included a donor consultation in late March 1998 and a meeting in May of the International Advisory Committee (IAC), which serves as the primary policy forum for donor capitals. At the IAC meeting, attention was given to the location and number of beneficiaries, United Nations interventions, restrictions on the operational environment and funding. It was also announced that the Secretary-General's Special Envoy would be resigning in June 1998. That same month, the Secretary-General appointed Ambassador Tom Eric Vraalsen of Norway as his new Special Envoy.

17. The main priority for the Special Envoy was to maintain and expand access, including to rebel-held areas of the Nuba mountains. During a stopover visit by the Secretary-General in mid-May 1998, the Government of the Sudan agreed to allow an assessment mission in rebel-held areas. This breakthrough followed a planned assessment in November 1997 from which the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) had withdrawn. By the end of the reporting period, however, no date had been agreed by the Government for the assessment mission.

18. The Special Envoy also focused his efforts on reducing constraints in the operating environment. Minimum operational standards were introduced with the aim of ensuring programme effectiveness and safety of humanitarian personnel in Operation Lifeline Sudan areas. As a result of these efforts, the Government consistently granted permits for international staff to monitor and supervise interventions, communications equipment was returned in the Government-held towns of Juba and Wau and assurances were received that the United Nations would be allowed to continue its duty-free importation of supplies, including fuel. Despite these improvements, operational bottlenecks persisted. On four occasions during the reporting period, flights into rebel-held areas were turned back by the Government flight tower in Juba, both United Nations agencies and NGOs continued to experience long delays in clearing goods through ports of entry and communications equipment remained in the possession of Government personnel in both Malakal and Bor. Repeated requests by United Nations agencies for new communications equipment for field operations, necessary for ensuring the safety of personnel, continued to be ignored.

19. The operational environment in rebel-held areas was negatively affected by the expulsion by SPLM in September 1997 of Action Contre la Faim (ACF), an NGO member of the southern sector consortium. Attempts to impose taxes on NGOs and the Government's refusal to grant travel permits further constrained humanitarian activities in areas controlled by SPLM. In RASS areas, confiscation of communications equipment and looting of NGO compounds constrained interventions. A draft of a new Memorandum of Understanding, which would have imposed unnecessary restrictions on NGOs, was withdrawn by SPLM after strong objections. At the end of the reporting period, a new draft Memorandum of Understanding, incorporating changes suggested by agencies of Operation Lifeline Sudan, was under consideration.

20. Efforts to highlight the plight of children in war zones were bolstered by the mission to Khartoum and Nairobi of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, in June 1998.

21. Implementation of the 1996 Operation Lifeline Sudan review continued. By April 1998, virtually all of the 41 recommendations endorsed by the United Nations agencies in the autumn of 1996 had been successfully implemented.

Achievements included the introduction in November 1997 of a humanitarian principles programme in Government-held areas at the request of the Special Envoy and the launch in August 1997 of one of the Organization's few integrated assistance and protection programmes for IDPs. Other reforms included the introduction of cost-recovery requirements at the Lokichokio base camp and the standardization of both food and non-food assessment methodologies. At the May 1998 IAC meeting, Operation Lifeline Sudan announced that a final "review of the review" would be conducted shortly and that results would be submitted to donors, thus finalizing the Operation Lifeline Sudan review process.

22. At the end of the reporting period, efforts to broker a ceasefire under the auspices of IGAD Partners Forum were under way. The aim of these efforts was to reinforce the peace process and provide greater access for humanitarian assistance to the areas with the most acute needs. As part of its ongoing efforts to support the peace-building process in the Sudan, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continued its round-table programme, convening a third meeting on good governance between senior representatives of the Government of the Sudan and SPLM in October 1997 in Bad Munstereifel, Germany.

III. Emergency operations and Operation Lifeline Sudan

A. General

23. The main priority for agencies working under the umbrella of Operation Lifeline Sudan continued to be the provision of emergency assistance to vulnerable, war-affected populations. During the crisis in southern Sudan, the Operation concentrated on stabilizing the situation by providing a package of emergency survival services to populations in need. The key element of the package was an adequate ration of food supplies. The Operation's agencies recognized that food distributions must be accompanied by, and coordinated with, a range of other emergency services if humanitarian interventions were to be fully effective in reducing prevailing malnutrition rates. It was clear that successful interventions in supplementary and therapeutic feeding, emergency health and water and sanitation as well as the coordinated and timely delivery of seeds and tools and other household food security inputs must all accompany food distributions if the basic survival needs of populations in acute risk were to be met.

24. A combination of access restrictions, insecurity, lack of resources, insufficient capacity and logistical bottlenecks in the first half of 1998 impeded efforts by WFP to deliver sufficient quantities of food during the early stages of crisis to the growing number of at-risk beneficiaries. The same factors hampered other interventions, including supplementary feeding, timely delivery of seeds and tools, emergency health care and the provision of safe water supplies. In order to maximize programme impact despite these constraints, the Operation's agencies coordinated their interventions through emergency response teams (ERTs). The aim of the ERT structure was to ensure that the most vulnerable populations in areas with the most acute needs received assistance first. ERTs were established for each emergency zone and served as the main forum for implementation of the emergency stabilization packages.

25. In the period from August 1997 to June 1998, Operation Lifeline Sudan distributed or pre-positioned approximately 54,554 metric tonnes of food. UNICEF and NGOs delivered over 4,500 metric tonnes of supplies to support activities in the sectors of primary health care, household food security, livestock health, water and sanitation, emergency education, children in especially difficult circumstances, gender and development, capacity-building, humanitarian principles and child rights.

26. As in the past, Operation Lifeline Sudan continued to be coordinated by the United Nations Coordinator of Emergency and Relief Operations in the Sudan (UNCERO) with assistance from the United Nations Humanitarian Coordination Unit (UNHCU) in Khartoum. UNCERO was responsible for the overall direction of Operation Lifeline Sudan, including policy formulation on the key issues of access, humanitarian principles and resource mobilization. On behalf of UNCERO, UNHCU played an increasing role in inter-agency coordination by working with United Nations agencies and NGOs to ensure the timely and effective provision of relief services to beneficiaries in Government areas, in particular to IDPs. UNHCU also served as the field-level secretariat for the Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs to the Sudan.

27. Under the leadership of the Operation Lifeline Sudan Coordinator Southern Sector, UNICEF continued its role as lead agency for the sector with responsibility for coordination in areas served out of Lokichokio. Specific responsibilities included managing the Lokichokio forward staging base, providing security for the 350 Operation personnel working inside southern Sudan and maintaining the air bridge.

B. Political and military developments affecting humanitarian relief efforts

28. Despite intensified fighting in parts of the country, notably Bahr Al Ghazal, western Upper Nile and the eastern border, there appeared to be little change in the strategic balance between the warring parties. Although SPLA is reported to have made some military gains in Blue Nile State, its January–February 1998 offensive against Government-held towns in northern Bahr Al Ghazal, launched after Kerubino Kwanyin Bol rejoined SPLA in January, was repulsed. Approximately 110,000 persons fled Government-held territory, crossing lines into rebel-held zones in the weeks following the attack. Further displacement was caused by raiding and looting between March and June 1998, particularly in Twic County, by the Murahaleen and the Popular Defence Forces (PDF).

29. Throughout the first six months of 1998, there was severe intra-factional fighting in Unity State/western Upper Nile, which had been relatively stable following the signing by SSIM of the peace agreement with the Government of the Sudan in 1997. The most intense fighting occurred in areas south-west of Bentiu, including Nhialdiu, Mankien and Duar. Persistent insecurity and looting forced all NGOs operating in the area to evacuate their staff and shut down programmes for several weeks during March and April 1998. The intra-factional conflict within SSIA/M led to the emergence of a new faction, the South Sudan Unity Movement (SSUM). While not entering into a formal agreement with the new faction, Operation Lifeline Sudan continued to meet humanitarian needs in the areas controlled by SSUM wherever possible.

30. The security and humanitarian situation along the country's eastern border from Kassala to southern Blue Nile also deteriorated sharply. In Kassala, inhabitants from a large number of villages on the Sudanese side of the border were forced to move inland as a result of shelling between opposition and Government forces. Over 20,000 people fled the front-line areas, temporarily settling in 22 sites. In late May 1998, local authorities agreed to relocate the IDPs to four secure sites.

31. Tension between the Reizegat and the Dinka tribes in South Darfur State increased during the reporting period as a result of military operations by PDF and Arab militia forces in northern Bahr Al Ghazal and hostilities between those forces and SPLA. Fearing a repetition of previous incidents, large numbers of IDPs in the area fled their camps and settlements. The 10,000 residents of Abu Matariq and Al Furdos evacuated their camps in early March, seeking safety in Khor Omer camp near Ad Daein and locations in Buram and Nyala provinces.

Security incidents affecting relief personnel

32. A considerable increase occurred in the number and severity of security incidents affecting Operation Lifeline Sudan personnel. In June 1998, three humanitarian workers, two from the WFP and one from the Sudanese Red Crescent Society, were killed by armed gunmen and two Red Crescent workers were injured following a food distribution in a Government village of the Nuba mountains region. From August 1997 to the end of June 1998, more than 200 Operation Lifeline Sudan staff were evacuated or relocated for security reasons from 37 locations in southern Sudan.

33. Three NGO compounds were attacked by armed men, and one attack at Yambio resulted in the fatal shooting of the Sudanese compound manager. Over 20 locations where Operation Lifeline Sudan staff were present were bombed by Antonov aircraft of the Government. Operation vehicles in southern Sudan, northern Kenya and Uganda were ambushed on 10 separate occasions. In the most serious incident, an RASS counterpart was killed when the Norwegian Church Aid vehicle in which he was travelling was ambushed by armed bandits.

34. The presence of landmines in many of the areas served by Operation Lifeline Sudan continued to cause injury to innocent civilians and impede the flow of humanitarian assistance. By the end of June 1998, more than 40 incidents had been reported in the Kassala area. Based on the findings of a 1997 Mine Clearance Policy Unit mission, United Nations agencies included a mine awareness project in the 1998 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Sudan. By the end of the reporting period, however, the project had not received donor funding.

C. Access

Flight clearances

35. Although Operation Lifeline Sudan had unprecedented levels of air access throughout most of the reporting period, the two-month flight ban over the entire Bahr Al Ghazal region paralysed its operations in the area and caused a massive deterioration in humanitarian conditions. An average of 164 locations was accessible by air each month, reaching a high of 181 locations in the period from April to June 1998. The number of locations denied each month by the Government fell from an average of 17 locations per

month during the last reporting period to an average of 7 per month.

36. Although six locations were cleared for air deliveries and three road convoys delivered relief supplies to the region during the ban, most of the 110,000 people who had been displaced by the outbreak of hostilities in Wau, Aweil and Gogrial and who were in need of immediate assistance could not be reached. The concentration of relief supplies at only a few locations during the period of the flight ban had the added affect of forcing already weakened populations to travel long distances in search of food.

37. The flight ban had a particularly serious impact on those locations in northern Bahr Al Ghazal which had been consistently denied air access by the Government. Prior to the ban, Ajiep, Akak, Akon, Thiek Thou and Warrap, which are only accessible by air and where approximately 185,000 people were in need of relief assistance, were rejected on a regular basis. Host populations in those areas were in a desperate condition at the time of the exodus. Within weeks after the arrival of the new IDPs, most of these communities were experiencing food deficits.

Barge operations

38. Seven barge convoys made deliveries during the reporting period. This was a significant improvement over the previous reporting period when there were no barge deliveries between September 1996 and July 1997 owing to delays by the Government in issuing of clearances.

Road access

39. In an effort to use the most cost-effective means of transportation, Operation Lifeline Sudan continued to supply approximately 40 per cent of relief assistance by road. Attempts by WFP to pre-position food commodities in Wau were obstructed by military forces in April and May 1998 and were abandoned when rains made the road impassable. WFP was consequently forced to undertake costly airlifts to Wau. The activities of Operation Lifeline Sudan were also constrained by the deterioration of the main road from El Doret to Lokichokio, which was essential for the supply of aviation fuel to the Lokichokio camp.

D. Internally displaced persons

40. As in previous reporting periods, the single most important factor leading to internal displacement continued to be insecurity. The largest number of displaced originated in Bahr Al Ghazal. Following the attack by SPLA in January 1998, approximately 110,000 persons crossed military lines from Government towns seeking safety and services in rebel-held zones. Tens of thousands more were displaced within the rebel zones as people moved in search of food and security. By early June 1998, between 100 and 200 IDPs per day were returning to the Government town of Wau from rebel areas in Bahr Al Ghazal. This number increased to 1,500 per day by the end of June when it was estimated that a total of 20,000 IDPs had returned. Operation Lifeline Sudan agencies predicted that the number of IDPs having returned to Wau would reach 50,000 by the end of July.

41. Three other notable movements of displaced occurred during the reporting period: 6,000 persons fled inter-tribal fighting in Al Geniena on the Chadian border; 20,000 fled IDP camps in Ad Daein following the January 1998 attacks in Bahr Al Ghazal; and a further 20,000 fled villages along the front line on the Eritrean border near Kassala. Although Operation Lifeline Sudan agencies continued to be denied access to rebel-held areas of the Nuba mountains, it was known that displacement from rebel zones to Government villages continued. Although it was expected that large numbers of the displaced currently in Khartoum might return to stable areas of eastern Upper Nile after SSIM had signed the 1997 peace agreement, actual movements during the reporting period were limited.

42. As part of UNHCU's new integrated IDP assistance and protection programme, launched in August 1997 with the deployment of six IDP Coordinators in Government areas, serious efforts were undertaken by the United Nations to work with local authorities to find solutions to the specific problems facing IDP communities. In a major break-through in June 1998, authorities in South Darfur agreed to provide IDPs with secure titles to land. In Kassala, local authorities agreed in May 1998 to relocate new IDPs from their insecure, inadequate camps to secure relocation sites. In Khartoum, United Nations agencies under the leadership of UNHCU worked with local authorities to develop a client-oriented urban planning policy incorporating the needs of populations scheduled for resettlement. In contrast to previous reporting periods, almost no forced demolitions occurred in Khartoum State.

E. Non-governmental organizations

43. During the first half of 1998, NGOs working in southern Sudan secured approximately $50 million of funding for programmes in both the food and non-food sectors. NGOs were active members in all of the emergency response teams and were able to provide financial and

material resources at short notice during the height of the crisis. As the main implementers of Operation Lifeline Sudan programmes, many NGOs were able to quickly redirect their programmes to areas of acute need.

44. In Operation Lifeline Sudan northern sector, the ERT structure facilitated the emergency operations of NGOs in areas where access for international NGOs had previously been restricted, including Wau and Unity states. Following recommendations of the Operation Lifeline Sudan review, the Humanitarian Aid Forum (HAF) was established in August 1997 as the principle coordination structure for Government areas. In Operation Lifeline Sudan southern sector, four new NGOs were admitted to the consortium. NGOs in the consortium agreed to adhere to the Operation's sector-specific standards and guidelines and to the formation of sectoral quality assurance teams aimed at monitoring programme delivery. The consortium also established a task force to make recommendations on improving information management.

45. Little improvement occurred in the operating environment of international NGOs working in Government areas. Despite United Nations advocacy, international NGOs continued to experience difficulties with entry visas, stay and travel permits, programme approval, importation of goods and licences for radio communication equipment.

46. NGOs working in rebel-held areas faced new restrictions on their operational environment. In September 1997, Action Contre la Faim was expelled by SPLM, which also attempted to impose taxes on NGOs and refused to grant permits. The introduction of a new Memorandum of Understanding which would have imposed unnecessary restrictions on NGOs operating in areas controlled by SPLM was postponed after strong objections from the international community. In RASS areas, confiscation of communications equipment and looting of NGO compounds also constrained NGO interventions.

F. Relief food assistance

47. Following the Operation Lifeline Sudan annual needs assessment in November 1997, WFP advised that food security in southern Sudan was deteriorating and that approximately 2.3 million people affected by war and drought throughout the country would require food assistance in 1998. Of these, it was estimated that 1.4 million were in areas covered by Operation Lifeline Sudan northern sector and 995,000 in areas served by the southern sector. The main reasons for the food shortage were continuous insecurity and a 45 per cent decline in food production owing to drought. It was therefore anticipated that WFP would provide 73,530 metric tonnes of relief food aid to the Sudan in 1998.

48. In the period from January to May 1998, WFP northern sector pre-positioned and distributed 15,200 metric tonnes of food assistance. This ensured that all sufficient food stocks were in place before the start of the rainy season in May, when roads become impassable. WFP northern sector food assistance reached an average of 148,000 beneficiaries each month. In the same period, WFP southern sector delivered 11,433 metric tonnes of food aid to an average of 383,600 beneficiaries each month.

49. In late May 1998, as a result of the worsening humanitarian crisis in southern Sudan, WFP conducted a thorough reassessment of the food security situation in the region. The results showed that the number of people in southern Sudan requiring WFP food aid had risen and that a significant increase in malnutrition rates had occurred among children under five, reaching as high as 40 per cent in Bahr Al Ghazal and 30 per cent in some parts of western Upper Nile. It was estimated that a total of 2.6 million people across the country would require 15,270 metric tonnes of food aid each month in the period from July to October 1998. Of these, 10,270 metric tonnes of food would be required each month for 1.2 million people served by Operation Lifeline Sudan southern sector. In the Operation's northern sector, 1.37 million people, including 194,000 beneficiaries in drought-affected North Darfur and Red Sea Hills, would require 5,000 metric tonnes of WFP food assistance each month.

50. In addition to expanding its air operations, WFP continued to explore other, more cost-effective means of delivering food aid. These included a proposal to increase road deliveries from north-west Uganda and Lokichokio by establishing a WFP fleet of trucks and a review of the logistical and cost implications of using a train convoy to make food deliveries along the Wau rail corridor. WFP suspended deliveries by rail in 1994 following widespread looting.

51. WFP also planned an additional four barge convoys for 1998. At the end of June 1998 a barge convoy to Juba was being loaded and was expected to depart Kosti in mid-July. Clearance was still pending for a barge along the Sobat corridor. Additional convoys were being planned along the Tonja-Fanjak and Renk-Malakal corridors.

G. Non-food assistance

52. In the non-food sector, priority was given throughout the reporting period to meeting the acute needs of at-risk populations. During the first half of the reporting period, a major financial shortfall forced UNICEF to cut back certain key programme activities. During the second half of the period, priority was given to meeting emergency needs in the worst-hit areas.

Health

53. Diarrhoeal diseases, malaria and acute respiratory infections, combined with malnutrition, continued to be the major causes of mortality and morbidity. Despite a considerable shortfall in funding for the health programme, an estimated 4.2 million people received basic health services. In its capacity as the lead operational health agency, UNICEF provided essential medical supplies, vaccines and training to health workers. In support of UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO) provided significant support for emergency health programmes, malaria control and polio eradication.

54. Relatively high immunization coverage rates of above 70 per cent for major childhood diseases were maintained in northern Sudan through the UNICEF expanded programme of immunization (EPI). In rebel-held areas, EPI coverage remained low, reflecting the lack of basic health infrastructure. Occasional outbreaks of measles were nonetheless controlled through mass immunization campaigns. Beginning in January 1998, National Immunization Days (NIDs) for the eradication of polio were held throughout the country including, for the first time, rebel-held areas. Despite logistical constraints and access restrictions caused by the two-month flight suspension over Bahr Al Ghazal, NIDs were successful in reaching 4.9 million and 5.1 million children under five in the first and second rounds, respectively. This activity, which was not covered in the 1998 Appeal, cost approximately $2.7 million and was supported technically and financially by WHO and the Centers for Disease Control. UNICEF-Khartoum also vaccinated more than 5,000 children as part of its barge outreach programme.

55. Completion rates of tuberculosis treatment dropped from 75 per cent in 1997 to 55 per cent in 1998, while default rates rose to more than 40 per cent over the previous reporting period. This trend caused considerable concern among humanitarian agencies since tuberculosis is the leading cause of adult deaths in southern Sudan. The Sudan continued to account for more than half the world's cases of guinea worm disease (dracunculiasis). In 1998, the number of cases of reported guinea worm disease decreased by 34 per cent over 1997. Agencies attributed this, however, to under-reporting rather than the absence of major progress in preventing the disease. The programme for the treatment and prevention of sleeping sickness, a potentially fatal disease if untreated, continued to be implemented by NGOs in the Tambura area of Equatoria. More than 8,000 people were screened and 700 treated for the disease. Humanitarian agencies expect that the disease is likely to spread to other populations owing to limited access to medical facilities, the prohibitively high cost of treatment and the high prevalence of the disease.

Household food security

56. UNICEF continued to provide agricultural, fisheries and livestock inputs to strengthen the food security of displaced and war-effected populations. Across Operation Lifeline Sudan target areas, 1,900 metric tonnes of seeds were supplied to approximately 250,000 households. The Operation's southern sector programme was considerably enhanced by the work of NGOs which contributed seeds, tools, transport and human resources, while from Khartoum, UNICEF took steps to strengthen technical coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Despite these efforts, Operation Lifeline Sudan was able to meet barely 50 per cent of assessed needs in areas served by the southern sector, so great was the decline in levels of food security. In areas served by the northern sector, insecurity in the first quarter of 1998 impeded the distribution of seeds and tools in Bahr Al Ghazal. In Upper Nile, inadequate funding resulted in only slightly over 50 per cent of the needs being met despite increased access to populations in that area.

57. Control of rinderpest, which devastates the cattle on which many Sudanese depend for their food security, continued to be an important component of the programme. During the reporting period, approximately 1.25 million cattle were vaccinated against rinderpest and over 900 community-based animal health workers, including vaccinators, were supported with training, supervision and equipment. The programme, which is coordinated by the Pan-African Rinderpest Campaign (PARC) and UNICEF, also draws on the expertise and resources of NGOs. In early 1998, an outbreak of rinderpest in Torit County was successfully controlled in a combined effort involving UNICEF, NGOs and counterparts.

Nutrition

58. The nutritional status of women and children continued to be of major concern during the reporting period, with child malnutrition in some areas reaching levels unprecedented in the history of Operation Lifeline Sudan. In areas of Bahr Al Ghazal, global malnutrition rates for children under five were as high as 62 per cent and in excess of 30 per cent in some areas of Unity State/Upper Nile.

59. UNICEF's nutrition programme covered 75 per cent of the accessible population in Government areas of Operation Lifeline Sudan, providing supplementary feeding supplies and other equipment to 72 feeding centres. Support includes provision of UNIMIX to 54 feeding centres in the South and the transitional zone, which benefited approximately 63,000 women and children. In rebel-held areas of southern Sudan, UNICEF and Operation Lifeline Sudan NGOs supported supplementary and therapeutic feeding centres at approximately 13 locations in Bahr Al Ghazal and 8 locations in western Upper Nile. The crisis in Bahr Al Ghazal posed the greatest challenge, with some 45,000 children below five years of age and a similar number of pregnant and lactating women requiring supplementary or therapeutic feeding.

Water and sanitation

60. Throughout areas served by Operation Lifeline Sudan, over 1,800 community handpumps were drilled, installed or rehabilitated, while over 40 courses were held to train community members in basic maintenance. UNICEF coordinated the work of 19 NGOs in the Operation Lifeline Sudan southern sector water and sanitation team, which played a major role in ensuring adequate supplies of clean water for feeding centres in the critical emergency zones of Bahr Al Ghazal and western Upper Nile. UNICEF also undertook a major project to rehabilitate and upgrade the Malakal Town water supply. The project commenced in January 1998 and will benefit 100,000 people living in and around Malakal Town. Efforts to promote hygiene awareness and safe sanitation include the construction of more than 3,000 household and school latrines as well as community training in hygiene and sanitation.

Emergency education

61. During the reporting period, more than 3,250 teachers and school administrators were trained in Operation Lifeline Sudan southern sector and 5,200 school teachers in the northern sector. Efforts to increase the number of women teachers included English language training for 880 female teachers. Efforts to promote quality basic education among the displaced children in the transitional zone focused on training in "Theatre for Life" for 80 master trainers from different displaced schools. This unique training programme covered topics such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child, peace and tolerance, life skills and gender sensitization.

62. In the Operation's southern sector, UNICEF provided over 1,000 basic education kits, each one sufficient for 200 children for one year, and 1,450 assistance kits for teachers. In the northern sector, 87,000 children benefited from UNICEF-provided educational materials. In addition, more than 80 classrooms serving 4,000 children were constructed or rehabilitated in South Kordofan, South Darfur, Blue Nile and Upper Nile.

Children in especially difficult circumstances

63. UNICEF, working in partnership with child-focused NGOs, including Radda Barnen and Save the Children Fund-UK, reunited approximately 300 children with their families. A further 103 young adults participated in basic teacher training before being reunified with their families in Bor and Bahr Al Ghazal. More than 200 unaccompanied minors were given assistance through community groups during the crisis in Bahr Al Ghazal. UNICEF also supported 45 psychosocial community supervisors, providing both training and equipment. During the first part of 1998, UNICEF-Khartoum took the lead in identifying, protecting and transporting 20 Ugandan children who had been abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army. The children had sought safety in UNICEF's Juba compound before being sent under UNICEF protection to Khartoum. The children were repatriated to Uganda under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).

64. During the earlier part of 1998, 40 child soldiers in SPLM areas and 75 in RASS areas were registered and interviewed as part of UNICEF-Nairobi's new demobilization of child soldiers programme coordinated with the full cooperation of both movements. After registration, the child soldiers were transferred to transit camps, given orientation and reunified with their families.

Humanitarian principles

65. UNICEF-Nairobi conducted six workshops for NGO personnel in Nairobi and Lokichokio on the basic humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, accountability and transparency. In addition, 12 dissemination workshops were conducted inside the Sudan, reaching approximately 1,200 participants including chiefs and other traditional leaders, representatives from civil

society, counterparts and the general public. As part of a ground-breaking new programme, UNICEF-Nairobi began direct training for rebel officers in basic human rights, with particular emphasis on the rights of children and other civilians in armed conflict. By the end of the reporting period, 76 senior SPLA commanders had received training.

H. Assistance to refugees

66. At the end of June 1998, 338,951 refugees, mainly from Ethiopia and Eritrea, with smaller numbers from Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Uganda, were under the protection of UNHCR in Sudan. Of these, a total of 160,291 in 26 camps in eastern Sudan were receiving food and other assistance. The remainder were living as urban refugees in various parts of the country.

67. During the reporting period, UNHCR successfully implemented the final stage of its voluntary repatriation programme for Ethiopian refugees which had begun in 1993. A total of 15,294 individuals out of the 50,000 Ethiopian refugees remaining in the Sudan were voluntarily repatriated. Plans were made for status determination screening exercises for refugees who chose not to return to Ethiopia.

68. In March 1998, in response to a request from the Eritrean Government, UNHCR and the Commissioner for Refugees in Sudan carried out a data collection exercise to establish the number of Eritrean refugees who wished to repatriate. The results showed that 150,660 out of a total of 300,000 refugees were willing to return to Eritrea. By the end of the reporting period, however, the Eritrean authorities had not yet agreed that the repatriated programme, suspended in 1995, could resume.

69. In September 1997, UNHCR fielded a protection and repatriation mission for 1,626 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who were residing in Juba. A further 38 Congolese refugees in Khartoum were registered for possible voluntary repatriation. Agreement from the Congolese authorities for the repatriation programme was pending at the end of the reporting period.

70. Other assistance provided by UNHCR included repatriation of 80 refugees under special repatriation programmes and facilitation of third-country resettlement for 277 refugees. UNHCR also assisted in the return of 101 Sudanese refugees to the Sudan from Kenya.

IV. Action taken by Member States

71. In addition to the activities described above, several Member States have provided information on action taken pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/169 F.

72. The Government of Australia has provided a total of $6.028 million, including $2.68 to the World Food Programme for displaced and drought victims and emergency famine relief; $3.208 million to four Australian NGOs for emergency seed distribution, emergency basic education and four primary health care projects; and $140,000 to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for IDP monitors.

73. For 1998, the Government of Belgium has made the following contributions to humanitarian programmes in the Sudan: support for the WFP emergency food assistance project on the balance of funding made available in 1993 in support of food assistance to the Sudan; continuation of the "Rehabilitation of Qala in Naha" project financed for 56,500,000 Belgian francs for the period 1987–1998 and implemented by the NGO agreement; contribution to aid provided through the European Union in the form of BF 11,800,000 allocated through ECHO for the period from April 1998 to March 1999.

74. The Government of China has through bilateral channels provided construction machinery for water conservation including spare parts and support for installation, trial run and training; equipment for household production including pulp separators, medium-sized tractors, tillage machines, complete sets of farm machines, clothes-making equipment, grain-processing equipment plus support costs for training and their installation and trial run.

75. The Government of Cyprus has provided a contribution of $5,000.

76. The Government of Denmark has contributed 21.2 million kroner ($3,110,000) as follows: Dkr 7 million to Save the Children (DK/US) for emergency kits; Dkr 2 million to DanChurch Aid for food and seeds; Dkr 1 million to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for food and health activities; Dkr 1.1 million to the Adventist Development and Relief Agency for distribution of protein biscuits; and Dkr 10 million to the World Food Programme for food aid.

77. Humanitarian and relief assistance for the Sudan from the Government of Finland in 1997 was contributed in the amount of 4.5 million markkaa.

78. In 1997–1998, the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany has provided assistance to the Sudan totalling

DM 3.7 million for support for: water supply, shelter materials and medical supplies to the German Red Cross for relief to internally displaced persons and flood victims; support through Aktion Afrika Hilfe (AAH) to the Maridi hospital and the training of medical personnel in southern Sudan; food-for-work in southern Sudan through German Agro Action; relief through World Vision International for internally displaced in Bahr Al Ghazal; feeding centres through Care International for internally displaced persons in Unity State; food provided through Caritas for internally displaced persons in Bahr Al Ghazal; WFP air transport of food for southern Sudan; and the ICRC emergency programme.

79. The Government of Ireland provided a total of £Ir 1,804,675, including specific contributions to UNICEF (£Ir 300,000), the World Food Programme (£Ir 650,000) and NGOs (£Ir 754,675).

80. For the current year, the Government of Italy has contributed 4 billion lire to implement humanitarian programmes in the Sudan, as follows: Lit 2 billion in food aid to benefit northern Sudan, plus Lit 400 million for a project to aid the southern population from the Kajo Keji region; the remaining Lit 1.6 billion have been allocated to Operation Lifeline Sudan for humanitarian assistance for the southern populations. In addition to this sum, a further contribution of Lit 1 billion to UNICEF has been planned in support of Operation Lifeline Sudan through the channel of regular programmes.

81. Emergency assistance to the Sudan in 1998 from Luxemburg totals 5 million Luxemburg francs contributed to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

82. The Government of Norway has announced that in 1998 contributions to the Sudan will total 85 million kroner. Of this, Nkr 50.9 million has been confirmed as of late June 1998, including assistance to: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (drinking water project); Christina Michelson Institute (peace negotiators, IGAD); Médecins sans Frontières-Oslo (health care, training and water assistance; primary health care); Norwegian Church Aid (food and non-food sector interventions in the fields of emergency food aid; health and nutritional care; rehabilitation of health clinics; education for IDPs, children and teachers in southern Sudan; food-for-work for IDP returnees; rehabilitation of road network; food/basic relief to IDP camps; voluntary repatriation programmes; peace and reconciliation; scholarships for southern Sudanese refugees in Kenya and Uganda; food and other emergency relief aid in Barh Al Ghazal); and UNICEF (aircraft operations).

83. During the period from June 1995 to June 1998, the Government of Sweden provided emergency assistance to the Sudan, *inter alia*, in the following areas: protection and humanitarian assistance; water, sanitation and health care; transport support; refugee care; education; repatriation; seeds and tools. The assistance in these areas during that period amounted to Skr 139 million (from January to June 1998: Skr 62 million). Main implementing partners have been UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP and ICRC.

84. Contributions from the Government of Switzerland in 1997 and the first half of 1998 totalled SwF 7,973,750 and relate to financial contributions to international and non-governmental organizations, the provision of food aid as well as support provided through the Swiss Disaster Relief Corps.

V. Concluding observations

85. At the end of the reporting period, prospects for an early end to the current crisis in southern Sudan remained limited. Populations in Bahr Al Ghazal continued to move into Government areas in search of food. Agencies predicted that in the short term more people would continue to cross the threshold from coping to starvation, necessitating adjustments in the number of people in need and the amount of relief required.

86. Projections indicated that the 1998 grain harvest will be poor: at the end of the reporting period, rains were already late and erratic and the area under cultivation had been reduced as a result of continuous displacement and lack of sufficient seeds. As a result, substantial amounts of international relief food aid are likely to be required until October 1999.

87. It was clear that funding support for the relief operation would be critical to the success of the coordinated effort by Operation Lifeline Sudan to stabilize the humanitarian situation and lower prevailing rates of malnutrition. The agencies also agreed that maintaining and expanding access to populations in need, including those in rebel-held areas of the Nuba mountains, would remain a top priority. The agencies recognized that a ceasefire would significantly improve the humanitarian situation in southern Sudan and allow humanitarian organizations to stabilize the current crisis more effectively.

88. Operation Lifeline Sudan agencies agreed that the security of relief personnel would remain of paramount concern in the aftermath of the June 1998 killings in the Government area of the Nuba mountains. It was agreed that

the United Nations would continue to insist that minimum operational standards be adhered to by the warring parties, including use of appropriate communications equipment, if humanitarian operations in conflict zones were to be maintained.

89. While appreciation for the overall progress achieved by Operation Lifeline Sudan is justified, there is no reason to be satisfied. Overall, the humanitarian situation is increasingly serious and many innocent victims continue to die. It remains to be seen whether early next year there will not be a repetition of the same drama as that which emerged in Bahr Al Ghazal. Operation Lifeline Sudan, the parties to the conflict and donor Governments must together ensure that the current high levels of humanitarian access are not subject yet again to renewed constraints imposed by the parties to the conflict.

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Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

Pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 50/203 and 52/100, the present report provides updated information on follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women by intergovernmental bodies, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations. The report is the third such report on follow-up presented this year on a rolling basis to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 52/100 of 12 December 1997, requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly, through the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, on follow-up to and implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women.

2. The Secretary-General, in previous reports to the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the Conference, noted the understanding of the Secretariat that the reports to the Commission on the Status of Women, the Economic and Social Council and the Assembly on the subject would be provided on a rolling basis. Each report would briefly summarize results of previous sessions of the other bodies and add new, up-to-date information. Three reports are therefore submitted in the course of a year to the three bodies under the broad heading of follow-up to the Beijing Conference and mainstreaming a gender perspective. An effort is made in each report to provide information that is most pertinent to the respective intergovernmental body in order to facilitate intergovernmental decision-making.

3. Thus, the reports to the Commission on the Status of Women emphasize efforts undertaken by the Secretariat in support of mainstreaming a gender perspective and other follow-up activities. The emphasis of the reports to the Economic and Social Council is on facilitating the coordination function of the Council. The reports to the General Assembly contain information from entities of the United Nations system, including specialized agencies and international financial institutions, as well as a review of activities undertaken at the national level and by non-governmental organizations and other institutions in civil society. Each report contains a section on means of implementation, including human and financial resource requirements.

4. Following this pattern, the present report provides an update of developments that have taken place since the submission to the General Assembly of the report of the Secretary-General on the follow-up to the Beijing Conference (A/52/281) in 1997.

II. Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective

5. The advancement of women, the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women[1] and gender mainstreaming were prominent themes at the sessions of the Economic and Social Council in 1998, and the United Nations system continued its active follow-up to the Beijing Conference during the period under review.

A. Results of the 1998 sessions of the Economic and Social Council in the areas of advancement of women, implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and gender mainstreaming

6. The three-day session of the Economic and Social Council in May 1998 on the integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits provided an opportunity to review the contributions of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination to coordinated conference follow-up at the inter-governmental level and throughout the United Nations system. Council resolution 1998/44 on this topic, adopted at its substantive session of 1998, referred, *inter alia*, to the key role of gender mainstreaming in integrated conference follow-up. The Council also adopted a number of thematic resolutions on the advancement of women. Gender issues and mainstreaming were also addressed in sectoral resolutions and agreed conclusions.

7. In its follow-up resolution to agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system (resolution 1998/43), the Council decided to pay particular attention to the feminization of poverty, its causes and remedies, when reviewing the theme of poverty eradication in 1999, and to ensure a gender perspective when reviewing the implementation and follow-up of major United Nations conferences and summits. It requested that any documentation to be prepared for this purpose provide an adequate basis to this end.

8. The Council's humanitarian affairs segment was devoted to the theme "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian activities of the United Nations system". In its agreed conclusions 1998/1, the Council requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, to ensure that a gender perspective was fully integrated into humanitarian activities and policies.

9. The coordination segment focused on the theme "Coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action". During the segment, the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women participated in a special discussion with other senior United Nations officials. She made proposals for further strengthening attention to the human rights of women in all human rights activities, including through cooperation at the inter-agency level. In agreed conclusions 1998/2, the Council devoted a section to the equal status and human rights of women. Reference was made to the Council's agreed conclusions 1997/2 and to ongoing coordination and cooperation in the United Nations system. The growing interaction between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights was welcomed, and further action was called for to increase attention to the human rights of women and to gender aspects in the protection and promotion of human rights in mainstream mechanisms. The Council also recommended the continuation of inter-agency consultations at the working level in the future as a forum for cooperation.

10. In resolution 1998/46 on further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, the Economic and Social Council, *inter alia*, addressed the need for gender mainstreaming in terms of the working methods of the functional commissions, documentation to be prepared in these fields, and the Council's relations with its functional commissions.

11. The Council also agreed on the themes for its 1999 substantive session, and decided that the high-level segment would address "The role of employment and work in poverty eradication: the empowerment and advancement of women" (decision 1998/298).

12. The Council's operational activities segment focused on the theme "Advancement of women: implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the role of operational activities in promoting, in particular, capacity-building and resource mobilization for enhancing the participation of women in development". The report of the Secretary-General contained in document E/1998/54 and Corr.1 surveyed progress in implementing the outcome of the Beijing Conference in the operational activities of the United Nations system. In the report and in the debate during the high-level meeting of the operational activities segment, it was noted that Council agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all activities of the United Nations system had provided a good framework for achieving policy coherence within the system and for promoting a more coordinated programming approach to the concept of gender mainstreaming.

13. Moreover, also during the high-level meeting of the segment, the centrality of national plans and priorities for operational activities in following up recent global conferences was stressed by members of the Council. At the same time, the pivotal role of the organizations of the United Nations system in fully incorporating a gender perspective into their policies and into operational activities to assist national Governments to implement the commitments arising from these global forums, in particular the Beijing Platform of Action, was emphasized. In this context, the crucial role of the resident coordinator in mobilizing the United Nations system to introduce gender mainstreaming in a coordinated manner at the country level was emphasized. The need for strengthening the role of gender units and gender focal points was recognized. The United Nations development funds and programmes were encouraged to mobilize resources from all available sources and to pay particular attention to allocating resources to gender mainstreaming activities and capacity-building. Donor countries were urged to consider earmarking funds for gender mainstreaming.

14. In its resolution on operational activities (resolution 1998/26), the Economic and Social Council emphasized the need for gender analysis to be an integral part of all operational activities and called for information on follow-up to the Beijing Conference to be incorporated in the triennial comprehensive policy review.

B. Follow-up by the United Nations system

15. The United Nations system has continued to actively pursue the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action since the previous report of the Secretary-General on the subject (A/52/281) was submitted to the General Assembly.

16. In his report to the Economic and Social Council (E/1998/53), the Secretary-General reported on the results of the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women and other functional commissions of the Council, as well as on activities carried out by the regional commissions. Notably, the Commission on the Status of

Women at its forty-second session had considered the report of the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001 (E/CN.6/1998/3). The report and its recommendations highlighted progress made and obstacles encountered by the United Nations system in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, which formed the structure for the system-wide plan. The mid-term review was also taken up by the Committee for Programme Coordination and the Economic and Social Council in 1998. The review provides a detailed picture of implementation.

17. The report of the Secretary-General also reflected the outcome of the third session of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality (New York, 25–27 February 1998), which continued its efforts in support of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

18. Information received by the secretariat on efforts to implement the Platform for Action from entities of the United Nations system since the previous report on this subject (A/52/281) is presented below. The present report does not, however, include information on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) since a separate report on its activities (A/53/363) will be before the General Assembly at its present session.

19. The *Population Division* of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs focused on health and mortality, including health and mortality with respect to women, which was the special theme of the Commission on Population and Development in 1998, and work began on an updated study of national abortion policies worldwide. The Commission decided that the theme at its thirty-third session, in 2000, would be "Gender, population and development".

20. The *Statistics Division* of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), initiated the dissemination of gender statistics in user-oriented formats and in a timely manner. Country tables from *The World's Women, 1995: Trends and Statistics*[2] were updated and made available on the Division's Web site. The Division also issued a *Handbook for Producing National Statistical Reports on Women and Men*,[3] an operational guide for national statistical offices and gender programmes in the compilation of gender statistics and their dissemination in a non-technical format. The Division's work also focused on the measurement of work. Activities included the preparation of trial classifications for time use; participation in a project on informal employment, and collaboration on a project on gender issues and labour force statistics.

21. The *Department of Political Affairs* included gender mainstreaming in its work plan for 1997–1998 and its budget for 1998–1999, making provision for training programmes designed to raise staff members' gender awareness. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office for Human Resources Management collaborated in organizing gender mainstreaming workshops, which were attended by 170 staff members. The Division for the Advancement of Women and the Electoral Assistance Division of the Department of Political Affairs collaborated on the compilation of sex disaggregated data and gender impact assessments. One member of the Department's staff participated in a workshop on women in peace-building and conflict-resolution, and another participated in a workshop on the impact of gender differences in political decision-making and conflict-resolution.

22. The *Department of Public Information* continued its ongoing multimedia communications strategy to support the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This was carried out, *inter alia*, through its network of United Nations information centres and services in 67 countries, which produced radio and television programmes and collaborated with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to highlight issues related to the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action. The Department also covered and promoted the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Department promulgated the 1998 statement on gender equality and mainstreaming of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, through all United Nations information centres.

23. The *Office of Human Resources Management* organized a gender mainstreaming training programme for the Department of Political Affairs and piloted a General Service Effectiveness Training Programme to be conducted Secretariat-wide, benefiting mainly female staff members in the General Service category. The newly implemented Performance Appraisal System was revised to include a mandatory goal for all staff with supervisory responsibilities with respect to goals demonstrating gender and cross-cultural responsiveness. A Quality of Work/Life Task Force analysed various work/life initiatives which are becoming more commonplace in the commercial world and will facilitate balancing work/family life for both male and female staff.

24. The *United Nations Centre for Human Settlements* (Habitat) is currently restructuring and a Gender Unit has

been created directly under the Executive Director with sufficient financial and human resources to ensure the implementation of the comprehensive gender policy. The Commission on Human Settlements, at its 1997 session, approved various resolutions supporting the Platform for Action. As a follow-up action, the activities of the Centre include a comprehensive gender policy; support for the Women for Peace Network: "No Homes Without Peace, No Peace Without Homes"; support for a campaign for women's land and property rights in the United Republic of Tanzania; and the elaboration of gender-aware sustainable environment indicators.

25. The *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development* (UNCTAD) established an internal interdivisional Task Force to assist in preparing the *1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development*, focusing on issues of globalization of trade and finance, the changing role of the State and the private sector and information and communication technologies, and their possible implications for the status of women. UNCTAD, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, assisted women entrepreneurs in developing countries through its operational activities. The expected output of one project is a synthesis report based on individual national reports to enhance the participation of women entrepreneurs in the economy and integrate them in mainstream development. To initiate an internal debate on UNCTAD commitments regarding the cross-sectoral issue of the empowerment of women and the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in its policies and programmes, a Workshop on Gender Sensitization was held in December 1997. Approximately 30 Professional staff members participated.

26. The *United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme* supported a project in South Africa developed by the Centre for International Crime Prevention to counteract domestic violence. This project will initiate two pilot outreach centres for women and children in difficult situations, as well as for men who voluntarily seek help from programmes geared towards the control of anger, the management of violent expression and conflict-resolution. The budget for the project is $660,000.

27. The Governing Council of the *United Nations Environment Programme* (UNEP), in recognition of the importance of gender sensitivity for the creation of effective programmes and projects in the field of sustainable development, encouraged UNEP to take concrete steps to integrate gender sensitivity and awareness into its programme and project planning. UNEP is studying the role of women in environment and development and is improving its collection, dissemination and use of gender-based analyses and sex-disaggregated data to ensure the integration of gender considerations in the development and implementation of its policies and programmes. The UNEP work programme for the biennium 1998–1999 includes the provision of information, data, methodologies, technical and legal expertise and networking capacity to ensure that both men and women participate and that gender concerns are reflected in project development and environmental decision-making.

28. The *Economic Commission for Africa* (ECA) convened a major conference entitled "African Women and Economic Development" and a series of subregional meetings on the implementation of the African Platform for Action. A kit for assessing the relevance of national plans of action and one for monitoring implementation were developed. A number of publications were also prepared such as the *African Women Report*, which will be an annual publication and which in 1998 focused on the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction. The first edition of a *Compendium of Best Practices* was being finalized, and statistical brochures were produced for each African country profiling the status of women. ECA collaborated with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the establishment of the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development to help carry on the work of the advancement of women in Africa. As of June 1998, $110,000 had been pledged for the activities of the Fund.

29. The *Economic Commission for Europe* (ECE) continued to work closely with women's NGOs in the region. Within the framework of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a seminar on the economic and social rights of women in countries in transition, was planned to be held in Warsaw for NGOs from countries with economies in transition. A meeting on gender statistics was jointly organized with INSTRAW in April 1998. The aim was to identify progress achieved and the problems faced by women in improving their economic and social situation in those countries. Gender focal points were designated in all divisions of the ECE secretariat to facilitate the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the work programme; initial intergovernmental discussions were held on gender and human settlements, the environment, trade and timber.

30. The *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean* (ECLAC), at its seventh session, held at Santiago de Chile in November 1997, approved the Santiago Consensus as an additional regional instrument to promote gender equity. The main objective of the Santiago Consensus is to accelerate the process of implementation and follow-up of the Platform for Action, the Regional Programme of

Action and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Plan of Action, by incorporating into national development strategies solutions to the problem of inequity of women through public policies and programmes at the national level. In collaboration with the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences, ECLAC initiated a joint project to examine existing indicators and design new ones on the participation and leadership of women in Latin America and the Caribbean. ECLAC also developed a subprogramme to promote tasks related to mainstreaming a gender perspective into the overall regional development process.

31. The *Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific* (ESCAP) made preparations to convene a high-level intergovernmental meeting in 1999 to review the regional implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. Activities continued on the economic empowerment of women; alleviating the feminization of poverty; promoting women in small businesses; training trainers for female entrepreneurship development; and promoting the human rights and legal status of women, including ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Activities were also aimed at preventing violence against women and trafficking of women and children; promoting information networking, including computer networking; and addressing such emerging issues as managing the impact of globalization on women, including the impact of the Asian financial crisis. Many of these activities were being implemented through NGOs and community-based grass-roots organizations.

32. During the period under review, the *Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia* (ESCWA) completed its conceptual framework for developing region-specific data and indicators for monitoring the advancement of women in the region. ESCWA convened a regional expert group meeting in December 1997 to review and appraise the role of NGOs in the West Bank and Gaza before and after the peace accords. The meeting considered the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, among other topics. ESCWA also organized a workshop at Tunis in 1997 in collaboration with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research to raise awareness of gender statistics and methods of data compilation, and a study was completed on the conceptual framework for developing region-specific data and indicators for monitoring the advancement of women. A working group was created in 1997 to formulate a plan of action to mainstream a gender perspective into plans and programmes of ESCWA in implementation of Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2. In addition, a task force was set up for the integrated follow-up to global conferences, and funding for a project formulated in this respect was approved.

33. The *Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (FAO) undertook a broad-range of activities including preparation of activities for World Food Day, 1998, the theme of which is "Women feed the world". FAO continued to implement its Special Programme for Food Security, targeting the low-income food-deficit countries, using gender analyses, and it assisted member States to implement the Beijing Platform for Action, primarily through the provision of research and policy advice and technical support activities. In addition, the FAO Socio-economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA) initiative was further developed to strengthen analytical and managerial methodologies and tools at the macro, intermediate and field levels, to incorporate a gender dimension in policy and strategy formulation. Supported by a network of gender focal points, core technical review groups and the Women and Population Division, FAO established an interdepartmental Committee on Women in Development. The Gender Unit was upgraded to a Division within the newly created Sustainable Development Department. FAO also made significant progress in restructuring to decentralize operations, which is instrumental to gender mainstreaming at the regional level. The decentralized structure includes a gender specialist assigned to each of the five regional offices of FAO. The gender specialists collaborate extensively with the decentralized divisions at the regional and sub-regional levels and work directly with the FAO national offices. The decentralized structure facilitated the implementation of regional Women in Development plans of action and national action plans.

34. The *International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women* (INSTRAW) shifted its focus to the impact of globalization on the advancement of women in response to new mandates. INSTRAW serves as a co-task manger for the inter-agency task force on an electronic database of gender training materials within the United Nations system. In addition, INSTRAW is preparing a publication on ageing within a woman's life cycle as a contribution to the International Year of Older Persons, 1999; the twenty-ninth issue of *INSTRAW News* is devoted to the same theme.

35. Networking activities continued with INSTRAW focal points. The INSTRAW Web site, linked to the WomenWatch Web site, included an on-line manual on the use of computer-mediated technologies for women's organizations.

36. The Board of Trustees of INSTRAW approved two new research programmes, one entitled "Engendering the political agenda", which will be carried out in close cooperation with UNIFEM, and the other entitled "temporary labour migration of women", in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration. The Institute prepared a fund-raising strategy to finance new research programmes that would cross-cut a number of critical areas of concern contained in the Platform for Action.

37. In 1997, the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP) issued a "Guidance note on gender mainstreaming", the result of a senior management review of experiences and lessons learned in 20 country baseline assessments, which set out UNDP goals, management responsibilities, skills and accountability measures to move forward on its commitment to gender mainstreaming. In addition, UNDP facilitated a series of regional and national learning, consultation and briefing meetings in 1997 as a pilot programme for mainstreaming a gender perspective into its work. The Regional Gender Programme's focus is on women's economic and political empowerment, women's leadership in the peace-building process, access to science and technology, and institutional capacity development for engendering national policy analysis. Based on its policy document on integrating human rights with sustainable human development, issued in January 1998, UNDP supported actions at the regional and country levels to strengthen women's legal rights to assets and opportunities, to link human rights to women's greater participation in conflict-resolution and peace-building, and to eradicate violence against women. UNDP also made a commitment through its resident representatives to support reporting by States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. With regard to indicators, UNDP contributed to a global research programme on engendering labour statistics and the valuation of unremunerated labour. In mid-1998, UNDP placed 18 UNV gender specialists in UNDP field offices. In collaboration with UNIFEM, UNDP is also supporting the placement of 10 gender advisers, principally in UNDP offices in selected United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)-designated countries to support the resident coordinator system for Beijing follow-up initiatives. Five UNDP regional programmes were committed to allocating at least 20 per cent of their respective resources to gender equality and advancement of women, targeted for example at poverty reduction, food security, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and development, access to micro-finance, violence against women, and women and leadership.

38. The *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) issued a checklist on the integration of gender equality issues in the evaluation of its programmes for use by programme specialists. Also, owing to the great success of the first version of the guidelines on non-sexist language, an improved and updated second edition in English, French and Spanish is being published for wide distribution. On the basis of the positive experience with the first two workshops for training statisticians in gathering and processing sex-disaggregated data, sponsored by UNESCO in Africa in 1996 and 1997, a similar workshop was held for Arab States. Efforts were made to include a gender approach in setting up the new International Institute for Statistics, at both the policy and the practical levels. In addition, women's contribution to peace, and more specifically to a culture of peace, was explored and enhanced in many ways, particularly in some parts of Africa, the Mediterranean and the Balkan countries. Gender mainstreaming was emphasized, particularly in the preparation of the two forthcoming UNESCO world conferences on higher education (Paris, October 1998) and science (Budapest, June 1999). Five regional forums on women and science, organized in collaboration with UNIFEM, which will precede the world conference on science, are aimed at ensuring that women are fully involved, both as participants and with respect to substance. The secretariat promoted gender mainstreaming through a network of gender focal points, and the Director-General created a considerably stronger "women and gender equality" mode of coordination, with three posts at the D-1 level, three Professional staff and three General Service staff.

39. The *United Nations Fund for Population Activities* (UNFPA) continued to employ strategies which addressed linkages between women's economic empowerment, gender equality and the exercise of reproductive and sexual rights. In addition, UNFPA supported a number of activities combining the provision of reproductive health services and information with micro-financing activities for women, and organized gender assessments of UNFPA country programmes in 13 countries. A gender theme group was created at headquarters. A study on gender focal points was initiated under the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality and training on gender continued.

40. The *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF) continued to carry out activities for life skills training in schools in order to promote overall health, reduce teen pregnancy and prevent human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) infection, female genital mutilation and violence against

women. A Latin American and Caribbean regional workshop was held in Jamaica in September 1997 to create a strategy for addressing adolescent pregnancy from a rights perspective and to share experiences and ideas for regional action. A regional project in the Middle East and North Africa examined ways to introduce the theme of children's and women's rights in the curricula of law schools. Many country offices adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child-Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as the framework in preparing country cooperation programmes. In addition, UNICEF supported collaborative efforts of NGOs, women lawyers and institutions and facilitated the review of national legislation in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in several African countries. To promote girls' education, UNICEF encouraged the enrolment of girls and improvement in the quality of their education in many African countries. In 1997, UNICEF collaborated with the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNFPA and ECA in the organization of the Expert Group Meeting on Adolescent Girls and Their Rights. In 1997, UNICEF also supported the Pan-African Conference on Peace, Gender and Development, which was instrumental in establishing a regional women's NGO network on women and peace-building.

41. Past experiences of the *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees* (UNHCR) produced some operational strategies and approaches for refugee women that have had a positive impact and are being documented. The People Oriented Planning (POP) training programme of UNHCR continued to effectively provide UNHCR staff and implementing partners with a framework for gender analysis in policy development and needs assessment in protection and programme interventions. In 1997, 27 POP workshops were held in 23 locations. A total of 3,023 persons (UNHCR and implementing partners) have been trained in this process since its inception in 1989. Increased emphasis is now being placed on the training of senior staff and representatives. Five regional workshops for representatives were planned for 1998. Indicators from the Career Management Services were revised to include issues of gender mainstreaming, refugee women, children and adolescents with a view to ensuring gender-sensitive managers.

42. During the period under review, the *United Nations Industrial Development Organization* (UNIDO) continued its strong support for the women entrepreneurship development programme, which is one of the 10 integrated packages of services provided by UNIDO. UNIDO reported that gender mainstreaming would be pursued, and the exact modalities would be elaborated upon the assignment of a gender focal point.

43. In the new structure of the *World Bank*, gender has been placed in the Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Network (PREM), allowing a focus on gender as a core development issue. The Gender Sector Board, with representatives from all regions and networks, has become fully operational. One of its concerns is to ensure that gender issues are addressed in all aspects of the Bank's operational, research and policy work, taking into account the fact that fairer treatment of women can increase both equity and economic efficiency. Women's banking, rural financing schemes, social funds, lending for basic needs, community development funds and a whole range of lending activities targeted women with increasing success. Also, the Bank's poverty assessments became more sophisticated in their treatment of gender issues. Several country assistance strategies (CAS) for countries with large gender gaps included innovative work to identify gender issues in a wide range of sectors, both directly and indirectly. Gender coordination units were being created in all regional offices, and many resident missions have a gender coordinator who often also works with NGOs. The World Bank sponsored a Gender and Development Workshop in April 1998, which brought together economists, other social scientists, gender specialists and researchers from inside and outside the Bank for a dialogue on gender research and policy priorities. Also, gender tools and techniques have been made easily available to staff through the internal gender Web page and the Gender Knowledge Management System and the external gender home page. The Bank helped to finance an innovative participatory approach to women's literacy, which is being implemented by Action Aid in seven countries. Together with ECA, the Bank sponsored the International Conference on African Women and Economic Development in April 1998, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of ECA, contributing $220,000 to the cost of the conference.

44. The *World Food Programme* (WFP) participated in the inter-agency task force on gender issues in Afghanistan and workshops and meetings, including a United Nations gender mainstreaming workshop in September 1997 and a United Nations gender experts workshop at Tunis in April 1998. Various tools and guidelines were developed to ensure a gender perspective and help staff and managers in formulating projects. Guidelines for Mother and Child Health (MCH) projects were being developed to improve targeting of the most vulnerable groups. Gender-sensitive guidelines for project planning were being finalized. A network of gender focal points was established at WFP

headquarters and in field offices. In addition, in regions where particular weaknesses regarding gender issues and mainstreaming have been identified, WFP is in the process of recruiting regional gender advisers.

45. The work of the *World Health Organization* (WHO) on violence against women and female genital mutilation is based firmly on the recognition that these practices are closely linked to prevailing gender norms in which women are usually undervalued and subordinated in various ways. In addition to developing the technical base for these issues, WHO played an important advocacy role and continued to be committed to strengthening the participation of women and women's organizations in the design, implementation and evaluation of health research, policies and programmes. Much of the work of WHO was undertaken in collaboration with women's NGOs. Several specific activities were aimed at strengthening women's participation in WHO and in country programmes. This work entailed both a technical and political process requiring shifts in organizational cultures and ways of thinking, as well as in goals, structures and resource allocations. Gender is one of the four core values of the new global health policy: "Health for All in the 21st century". All six of the WHO regional offices have focal points on women, health and development, which promote work in the area of women's health, and gender and development.

46. The *World Intellectual Property Organization* (WIPO) has begun organizing an exhibition on the topic of women inventors, which covers women inventors from all regions of the world, to be inaugurated on the occasion of the opening of its visitors' centre.

47. The *Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS* (UNAIDS) continued to work actively to support the development of gender-sensitive multisectoral programmes and strategies on HIV/AIDS. At the global level, the institutional mechanisms for this purpose include the UNAIDS Inter-Agency Working Group on Gender. At the national level, inter-agency theme groups on HIV/AIDS have been established in 152 countries. These are composed of HIV focal points from the UNAIDS co-sponsoring agencies. To ensure the provision of affordable preventive and care services relating to HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS is collaborating actively with the Division for the Advancement of Women in the preparation of documentation for the high-level review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, five years after its adoption. Experts on women and HIV were fielded to conduct studies for presentation at an expert group meeting on women and health organized by the Division in collaboration with WHO in Tunisia in September 1998. A gender and HIV adviser was appointed by UNAIDS in New York to coordinate work with the co-sponsors. UNAIDS collaborated actively with UNDP in developing a topic module on gender concerns in HIV and development. This was incorporated in the UNDP capacity-building strategy on gender and has been contributing towards strengthening national capacity and enhancing understanding of key partners about the gender dimensions of the epidemic.

48. The *United Nations University* Institute for New Technologies (UNU/INTECH) prepared a plenary session paper entitled "Gender and telecommunications – an agenda for policy". The paper and the subsequent discussion thereon led to further commitment to a gender dimension which would be incorporated in all aspects of the work of the International Telecommunication Union. UNU/INTECH also provided a gender dimension to a Virtual Conference on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Jobs, organized by ILO in May/June 1998.

49. The current strategic plan of the *United Nations Volunteers* (UNV) programme, "Strategy 2000", for the period 1997–2000, makes gender equality a key area of concern. This involves continued affirmative action towards gender balance among serving United Nations volunteers; increased attention to gender dimensions of UNV-supported projects; and gender-sensitization training for United Nations volunteers, UNV programme officers in UNDP country offices and UNV headquarters staff. Gender training has been included as an integral part of the initial briefing programmes for all United Nations volunteers and UNV programme officers. Gender training has also been initiated for UNV headquarters staff in Bonn.

III. National strategies and action plans

50. In the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Governments were encouraged to prepare national action plans for the implementation of the Platform for Action. As of 10 August 1998, 98 Member States and one observer State had submitted their national action plans or strategies and information on implementation to the United Nations Secretariat.

51. The Division for the Advancement of Women prior to the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women, has analysed a total of 86 of those national action plans. Many of the plans were undertaken in collaboration with policy makers and actors from civil society. National machineries, many of which were created or strengthened after the Beijing Conference, played a key role in preparing

national action plans. Some covered all critical areas of concern, but others reflected national priorities and were limited to certain critical areas, reflecting regional differences and preferences. The plans highlighted the supportive role played by the international community, in particular the United Nations system, in the drafting and implementation process in many countries. The majority of plans contained both general policy recommendations and concrete action proposals. Only a few established comprehensive time-bound targets and benchmarks or indicators for monitoring. Most action plans did not propose budgets or indicate sources of financing for the actions indicated. Completion and monitoring of national action plans constitutes one aspect of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Platform for Action and will be useful for assessing policies and projects that have been successfully implemented when the General Assembly meets in 2000. The General Assembly will examine how policy declarations have been converted into concrete policies followed by actions, which benchmarks have been met, and which indicators were appropriate for measurement purposes.

IV. Reported activities of non-governmental organizations and other institutions of civil society

52. At the international, regional and national levels, non-governmental organizations continued to pursue the follow-up to the Beijing Conference. While these activities were not reported systematically to the Secretariat, some have been brought to the attention of the Division for the Advancement of Women since the previous reports were submitted to the General Assembly and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-second session. Since then, a number of events have occurred under the auspices of non-governmental organizations, which are noted here as examples of the widespread follow-up to the Conference by civil society.

53. As part of its ongoing effort to monitor progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) in March 1998 issued its latest report on the implementation of progress to coincide with the forty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The report, entitled "Mapping progress", contained information collected from Governments and non-governmental organizations in 90 countries and analysed successes and setbacks in addressing the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action, with special emphasis on the impact of macroeconomic policies on women's rights to employment, health and education.

54. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) actively followed up the Fourth World Conference through its programmes at the international, regional and national levels. Among these were legal advisory services to women in Colombia; legal counselling and education for Palestinian women; advocacy for the equal and reproductive health needs of women in marginalized communities in Nepal; campaigns against unsafe abortion in the Russian Federation and South Africa; campaigns to end female genital mutilation in Egypt, Kenya and Uganda; and income-generation activities and advocacy in China, Malaysia and Thailand to empower women and girls.

55. Following recommendations from their workshop on democratization and violence against women held at the NGO Forum in Beijing in 1995, the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD) launched a new campaign in the spring of 1998 against institutional discrimination against women in the financial sector. AAWORD addressed the particular financial needs of women from the South and increasing poverty among them, and advocated for gender equality in international financial policies.

56. The training of trainers has been a preferred activity of women's groups and non-governmental organizations as it has the potential to reach out to a large number of people in communities. Thirty young women from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific participated in a World Young Women's Christian Association (World YWCA) Training of Trainers Workshop in Sri Lanka from 24 April to 2 May 1998. The participants learned how to build their skills and knowledge in order to become better trainers of other young women. They exchanged tips and training techniques and analysed different approaches to common problems.

57. A training of trainers workshop entitled "Women in politics in Central America: regional advocacy" was held in Managua, Nicaragua, from 20 June to 1 July 1998, organized by Global Women in Politics, Cenzontle and the Central American branch of the Women in Politics Network. Women campaigners active in the field of human rights and community-based women's projects came together from countries in Central America to share strategies and tools for increasing women's political influence. They also discussed a model strategy for training, especially political training and advocacy.

58. The Centre for Women's Global Leadership organized its sixth Women's Global Leadership Institute, with a focus on building a culture of human rights, from 8 to 19 June 1998. This intensive training programme involved 25 selected women's human rights activists from all over the world and included workshops, panel discussions and theme group discussions on such subjects as violence against women, reproductive health, funding and networking, and resulted in a public forum on 18 June 1998.

59. The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) held a regional conference on gender and communication policy for 32 participants from anglophone African countries in Cape Town, South Africa, from 1 to 4 June 1998. Country reports were presented by those who were working in the field of gender and the media, and the panel presentations focused on, *inter alia*, images and stereotypes in the media, violence and the media, and poverty and its effect on women's participation in the media.

60. A Conference on the World of Women's Information was held in the Netherlands from 22 to 26 August 1998. The Conference was initiated by the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement. It was held as a follow-up to the agreement by Governments at the Beijing Conference to use women's information as an instrument for policy-making. The Netherlands Conference called for strengthening alliances between Governments and women's information centres and for developing and promoting the accessibility and visibility of women's information services and activities. The latter will be facilitated by a source book on women's information centres around the world, which is in preparation.

61. Other meetings were held on related topics, for example, the Expert Meeting on European Women's Thesaurus, held at Brussels on 16 and 17 May 1998, organized by a consortium of NGOs, and the meeting entitled "Electronic Networking and Resourcing: Strategies for Women's Information Centres", held at Manila from 20 to 23 April 1998, organized by Isis International, Manila.

62. Further examples of NGO follow-up can also be cited. The Solidarity Front for Women Workers (SFWW) in Taiwan Province of China organized the World Action Forum for Sex Workers' Rights in May 1998. The Committee for Asian Women mobilized a signature campaign for ratification of the ILO Conventions on Part-time Workers (No. 175) and Home Work (No. 177). The Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre organized a regional workshop on women and health in Dhaka in November 1997 and, also in Dhaka, the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific held a regional workshop entitled "Towards Gender Equity: Poverty, Rights and Participation" whose objective was to advocate compliance with the Beijing Platform for Action. The United Nations Environment and Development United Kingdom Committee and Gender 21 hosted a conference in June on gender and humanity into the twenty-first century, in London in June 1998. The African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town and the Association for Women in Development held a seminar on transformational power and leadership for gender equality and social change in Cape Town in June. The NGO Working Group on Girls conducted a survey of 248 NGOs in 87 countries on progress in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action which indicated that while commitments have been made and laws passed, the actual implementation is not consistent. Girls are enrolled in schools but the drop-out rate continues to be high and while public awareness of violence is increasing, sexual and physical abuse of girls within and outside the family is still prevalent in all regions of the world.

V. Means of implementation, including human and financial requirements

A. Gender-sensitive programming and budgeting and resource mobilization

63. A few respondents addressed the question of gender-sensitive programming and budgeting and financial resource mobilization.

64. FAO reported that it does not have a system for gender-sensitive budgeting. However, it makes use of, and actively seeks, extrabudgetary funds for the implementation of gender-responsive programmes, such as the SEAGA approach and programmes within the household resource management field. The programme and finance committees avoided budget cuts in areas related to women and development for the biennium 1998–1999.

65. During the period under review, UNDP increased its core funding resources to address gender equality and advancement of women issues. To this end, a global gender equality programme was approved in 1997 for $7.8 million which focuses on research and application of policy and analytic frameworks for gender equality, capacity development and learning networks, constituency building and partnerships for the Fourth World Conference on Women follow-up, and building synergies with regional initiatives for the advancement of women.

66. While preparing its work plans for the biennium 1998–1999, UNESCO paid particular attention to strengthening women-specific projects and to gender mainstreaming in all fields of its competence. Compared with previous years, a larger proportion of UNESCO regular programme funds was earmarked for activities that benefit women, girls and gender equality. The new overall system of monitoring UNESCO programme implementation will assist the gender coordinator in monitoring the progress of women-specific projects and activities and their periodic evaluation. This will be reinforced with the use of specific budget codes for women and gender activities, which have been initiated to ensure that these activities do not suffer possible budget cuts in the future.

67. The World Bank undertook an initiative related to financing projects and programmes to promote the Beijing Platform for Action which involved cooperation with multilateral and bilateral donors and with NGOs to provide funding for microenterprises through the Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest. Also, since Beijing, the Bank has done much to integrate girls' education into its country dialogues, country assistance strategies and lending programmes. Notably, overall annual lending for education is projected to be above $2 billion by the end of the decade, and close to $800 million is expected to go to girls' education.

B. Initiatives to increase the proportion of women in Professional posts

68. While the goal of achieving gender equality in the United Nations has not yet been achieved, during the period under review a number of positive measures were undertaken throughout the system in this regard. This included a number of measures implemented by the Office of Human Resources Management, including the opening of all vacancy announcements at the P-5 level and above to external candidates to widen the pool of eligible female candidates. Also, executive searches have been conducted with the primary goal of identifying and attracting female candidates, particularly from developing countries. Résumés received from female candidates are now handled on a priority basis. Additional information may be found in the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/53/376).

69. With regard to staff policies, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has adopted measures to recruit personnel in accordance with established procedures and transparent processes to ensure that it is served by persons having the required qualifications, experience and expertise. The existing imbalance and disparities in gender and geographical representation, especially at the senior levels must be rectified through affirmative action.

70. In UNDP more than 30 per cent of the senior managers at headquarters are women. However, there was uneven progress in the organization, particularly at the field level. In January 1998, UNDP approved a new policy that provides increased female staffing targets, accountability measures for those targets, and a recruitment policy.

71. UNEP assisted its staff in complying with United Nations directives and achieving targets related to the hiring and promotion of women, as well as in establishing monitoring techniques to assess and report on progress.

72. UNV continued to promote highly qualified women volunteers. As a result, approximately 50 per cent of the UNV programme officers in the UNDP country offices are women. Currently 35 per cent of all serving United Nations volunteer specialists and field workers are women and efforts are being undertaken to increase this ratio.

73. A joint UNDP/UNIFEM/UNV pilot project to place UNV gender specialists in UNDP country offices in Africa, Asia, Latin America and countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States to increase gender expertise in United Nations country programmes was recently launched through a workshop held at INSTRAW headquarters in Santo Domingo in May 1998. The majority of those specialists are women.

VI. Conclusions

74. Further progress was made during the period under review on the follow-up to the Beijing Conference. The adoption by the Economic and Social Council of agreed conclusions 1997/2 on gender mainstreaming and the follow-up resolution adopted by the Council in 1998 (resolution 1998/43) constitute the most comprehensive intergovernmental actions to date on gender mainstreaming. They constitute a firm basis from which to proceed expeditiously with concrete steps to achieve measurable progress in gender mainstreaming at all levels and in all areas. In resolution 1998/26 concerning operational activities and advancement of women, the Council provided guidance to the United Nations system in implementing the Platform for Action and called for gender issues to be taken up in the triennial comprehensive policy review. The General Assembly may wish to take action on the recommendations of the Council, including calling for future triennial comprehensive reviews to integrate a gender analysis and

reflect developments with respect to the advancement of women in operational activities of the United Nations system.

75. The report of the Secretary-General on the mid-term review of the implementation of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996–2001 (E/CN.6/1998/3) provided a detailed analysis of the follow-up to the Beijing Platform for Action by the United Nations. A new system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women to cover the period 2002–2005 will be formulated. The initial outline of the plan will be considered by the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality in 1999. The draft plan will then be prepared and submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women for comments at its forty-fourth session, in 2000, as well as to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2000.

76. As noted previously, a broader assessment including indicators of and recommendations for further action with regard to capacity-building for gender mainstreaming at the national level remains to be made. This might be addressed on a priority basis during the consideration of critical area of concern IV.H (Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women)[4] by the Commission on the Status of Women in 1999.

Notes

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.95.XVII.2.

[3] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.XVII.10.

[4] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women* ..., chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, chap. IV.H.

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Strengthening of the rule of law

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-second session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 52/125 of 12 December 1997, in which it affirmed that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights remains the focal point for coordinating system-wide attention on human rights, democracy and the rule of law; welcomed the deepening of the ongoing dialogue initiated by the High Commissioner for Human Rights with other relevant bodies and programmes of the United Nations system with a view to enhancing system-wide coordination of assistance in human rights, democracy and the rule of law; and encouraged the High Commissioner to pursue that dialogue, taking into account the need to explore new synergies with other organs and agencies of the United Nations system with a view to obtaining increased financial assistance for human rights and the rule of law. At the conclusion of the resolution the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the resolution.

II. Assistance provided by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the area of strengthening the rule of law

2. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, resolution 52/125 and other relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has principal responsibility within the United Nations system for providing advisory services and technical and financial assistance with a view to supporting actions and programmes in the field of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and for coordinating system-wide assistance in this field.

3. As noted in previous reports, the technical cooperation programme (hereinafter, "the programme") of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has been developed to respond to requests from Member States seeking to strengthen the rule of law and, thereby, to secure the effective enjoyment of all human rights. Programme content remains focused principally on the elements set out in the framework for strengthening the rule of law elaborated by the Secretary-General in his report to the General

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Assembly at its forty-ninth session, in 1994 (A/49/512, para. 5).

4. The number of States seeking assistance in fortifying and consolidating the rule of law is one indicator of the growing global realization of its importance. In 1998 there was a continuation of the trend of dramatic programme growth which has characterized this decade, as indicated by yet another consecutive increase in the number of activities implemented under the programme, which has grown from 2 in 1984; to 37 in 1989; 130 in 1994; 215 in 1995; 402 in 1996; and 483 in 1997. In the past year, the programme has carried out rule of law support activities in more than 50 countries and territories, among them: Albania, Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Georgia, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Rwanda, South Africa, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam and Zambia. These national activities were complemented by more than 20 global and regional projects under the programme. Thus, demand by the governmental and non-governmental institutions of Member States remains high. Programme resources, on the other hand, have not kept pace with this demand, such that neither the allocation under the regular budget, nor voluntary contributions have proved sufficient to satisfy assistance requirements during the reporting period.

III. Programme content

5. The programme is aimed at assisting Governments, at their request, in promoting and protecting human rights at the national and regional levels. In particular, assistance is provided on incorporating international human rights standards into national laws, policies and practices and building national capacity and regional structures for the promotion and protection of all human rights, democracy and the rule of law. All assistance provided by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights under the technical cooperation programme is based upon the international standards contained in the human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations and on international practice in applying those standards in all regions of the world. Programme activities are carried out within the context of national development objectives and coordinated United Nations system assistance in support of those objectives.

6. The programme offers a wide range of human rights assistance to requesting Governments, including: the creation and strengthening of national human rights institutions; human rights training and support to parliament, the judiciary, and police, military and prison officials; constitutional assistance; legislative reform and the administration of justice; the human rights aspects of free and fair elections; the promotion of human rights education, including curriculum development; and support to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society institutions. Expert advice and assistance is also available for specific human rights issues, such as the formulation and implementation of comprehensive human rights national plans of action, and compensating victims of human rights abuses.

IV. National human rights institutions

7. The components of the programme thus follow closely the elements of the 1994 framework (see para. 3) and are based upon the same broad institutional approach in contrast to other, more narrow rule of law programmes which, traditionally have concentrated efforts on the judiciary and its direct concomitants. The inclusion as a programme focus of independent national human rights institutions, such as human rights commissions and ombudsman offices (ibid., para. 5 (a) (vii) and (d)) is a case in point. The programme, and its national partners, have long recognized the potential valuable contribution of such institutions to the good functioning of the rule of law, complementing with specialized expertise and constitutionally mandated vigilance the crucial roles of the judiciary, the legislature, the executive and NGOs.

8. Activities carried out by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in support of national institutions can be broadly divided into two areas: the provision of practical advice and assistance to those involved in the establishment of new national institutions or the strengthening of existing ones; and facilitating international and regional meetings of national institutions. In the past year, for example, assistance for such meetings included regional forums in Asia and Africa and a global conference held in Mexico.

9. Establishing an appropriate constitutional or legislative foundation for any new national human rights institution is of primary importance as it is essential that the institution

be able to respond adequately to the needs of the community it is to serve. In recognition of the importance of the pre-establishment phase, the programme provided preliminary advice or assistance to a large number of countries currently considering or actually establishing a national human rights institution. Last year, those countries included Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Georgia, Liberia, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Moldova, Rwanda, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

10. Assistance is also provided to recently established national institutions. In South Africa, the Human Rights Commission is a central focus of the technical cooperation project of the Office. A substantial project of technical assistance to the Latvian Human Rights Office is currently being implemented. A needs assessment mission was fielded by the programme in advance of a comprehensive programme of support for the new Ugandan Human Rights Commission and a technical cooperation project has subsequently been prepared, in close consultation with the Commission. Advice and assistance has also been provided to the new Human Rights Commission in Zambia. Other national institutions which have worked in cooperation with activities sponsored by the High Commissioner include those in India, Indonesia, Palestine and the Philippines.

V. Programme methodology

11. All projects, whether directed to the judiciary, to prosecutors, to police or to a national human rights commission, are developed in close cooperation with the requesting Government and the United Nations agencies present in the country concerned. Assistance may take the form of expertise, advisory services, training courses, workshops and seminars, fellowships, grants and the provision of information and documentation.

12. Within this overall framework, determining particular programme content on a country-by-country basis is accomplished by application of a standard methodology, which is itself triggered by a formal request from a Government. The request is followed by a multiple-stage project cycle, the main phases of which are: (a) needs assessment, (b) project formulation, (c) project implementation, (d) project monitoring, (e) project evaluation and (f) project follow-up.

13. The needs assessment is a study of the country's particular institutional needs, priorities and capacities for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Assessment teams meet with all interested parties, both governmental and non-governmental, in close cooperation with the United Nations Resident Coordinator, United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as local donors, and compile detailed information on current policies, legislation, and human and financial capacities in key areas. Needs assessments thereby ensure a clear understanding of government priorities, objectives, programmes and plans of action. The resulting report provides the framework for developing possible future technical cooperation activities to strengthen national efforts in identified areas and contribute to the achievement of national objectives, ensures coordination with existing or planned assistance from other donors and sometimes facilitates additional support from other international sources. Last year, such assessments were undertaken in Gabon, Mali and Panama, among others.

14. Following the needs assessment, the programme is usually requested to develop, in partnership with the Government, a project document focusing on the problems to be addressed through institution-building. The document describes the situation which required the development of a project and the reasons the project is initiated; outlines the plan of what will be done and what will be produced when and by whom; and assesses the situation that is expected to exist when the project ends. The project document is also a contract outlining the obligations of each partner in the project; provides the basis for accountability; includes a guide to planning and implementation; and provides the framework for evaluation and the criteria by which the success of the project will be assessed.

15. Project formulation is carried out in close consultation with the Government and other partners (both official and non-governmental) on the final design of the proposed project, including problem analysis and definition, the identification of the intended solution and a strategy for achieving it. The process also outlines the most appropriate inputs and implementation arrangements for the production of project outputs; the risks involved and how they can be avoided; and what financial resources are needed from the Office and the Government concerned. In the past year, project formulation missions were undertaken in Gabon, Lesotho, Madagascar, the Russian Federation, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and countries of the former Yugoslavia.

16. Project monitoring is carried out throughout the life of all projects, sometimes including periodic monitoring missions from headquarters, where appropriate. The purpose of such missions is to record progress, to ensure efficient and effective project implementation, to identify any problems

with a view to adapting project activities accordingly and to adjust to new needs and conditions not foreseen at the design stage. In the past year, project monitoring missions were undertaken in Armenia, El Salvador, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, the Republic of Moldova and Togo.

17. The final phase of a project cycle is a terminal project evaluation. All evaluations are carried out by independent consultants, who assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project activities and results. This process ensures that lessons learned are applied in the design and implementation of future projects, both in the country concerned and elsewhere. Last year, independent evaluations were carried out in connection with projects in Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Mongolia, Poland and the countries of the former Yugoslavia.

VI. Selected country examples

18. Illustrative of rule of law programme content are the Office's assistance projects for Burundi and Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip). In Burundi, the Office of the High Commissioner has been providing since 1996 a range of support for strengthening the rule of law, including-training for the armed forces in human rights and humanitarian law; development of a national human rights education curriculum; support for the building of the human rights promotional capacity of the media and local NGOs; and support for the strengthening of the judiciary in accordance with international human rights standards. Work is also under way to support the fight against impunity and to promote reconciliation by reinforcing the institutions of justice administration. The project also supports legal assistance and representation for victims and prisoners appearing before the Court of Appeals.

19. In the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Office has worked since 1994 to support the efforts of the Palestinian Authority in a broad range of rule of law development areas. Support activities are targeted to the development of national rule of law policy (including a national plan of action); strengthening of rule of law institutions (including attention to the human rights capacities of the Palestinian police and prison officials; the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizen's Rights (PICCR), the Legislative Council and Palestinian NGOs); and the development and consolidation of the Palestinian laws themselves (including input on a new prison law, the draft Basic Law and others). The Office is working to these ends with official institutions of the Palestinian Authority, with Palestinian NGOs, with the Palestinian judiciary, PICCR and a host of other partners.

VII. Increasing system-wide coordination

20. In an effort to bridge the gap between the ever growing demands on the programme and the limited resources made available for its development and implementation, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in the context of her programme for the integration of human rights throughout the work of the United Nations system, has pursued a policy of enhanced collaboration with other key United Nations actors.

21. In particular, the Office of the High Commissioner has deepened the ongoing dialogue with other United Nations entities through regular bilateral consultations and participated in each of the four executive committees of the policy coordination group of department heads and senior officials created by the Secretary-General to improve system-wide coordination, including the key substantive areas of peace and security; economic and social affairs; development cooperation; and humanitarian relief.

22. The Office also in March 1998 concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on cooperation both in the field and at headquarters and established regular follow-up meetings on its effective implementation. This new cooperative arrangement between the Office and UNDP is perhaps the most important new development in this area. The detailed 33-paragraph Memorandum of Understanding defines this relationship which is designed to increase coordination, mutual support, efficiency and the effectiveness of the respective programmes.

23. In a time when demands for rule of law assistance are at an all-time high level, this cooperation on the part of the United Nations programme principally responsible both for assistance to strengthen national capacity and for system-wide coordination at the country level (UNDP), on the one hand, and the Office mandated to promote and protect human rights while providing system-wide coordination on matters relating to the rule of law and democracy, on the other, is a development of considerable import. This unprecedented internal merger of rule of law assistance resources will afford for the United Nations and its Member States seeking to enhance the rule of law, more efficient, readily available and effective rule of law assistance programming at the country level.

24. In particular, the Memorandum of Understanding sets out seven new points of agreement directly relevant to United Nations rule of law assistance: (a) cooperation in the design and implementation of projects at both the headquarters and country levels, and mutual assistance to countries in their incorporation into national development planning; (b) exchange of expertise in rule of law development to support national programmes; (c) development of joint projects of UNDP and the Office in this field; (d) mutual support to local human rights organizations; (e) provision by the Office of substantive inputs in the context of the UNDP Governance Component of the Special Initiative on Governance in Africa (SIGA); (f) the issuance of a public information paper prepared by UNDP and the Office on their joint technical cooperation (including rule of law) activities; and (g) consultation and cooperation in the implementation of the recommendations of the various world conferences and summits relating to human rights, democracy, development and the rule of law, etc.

25. Implementation of the agreement has already begun and is being facilitated by a joint task force established for the purpose. At the field level, one particularly innovative joint project of UNDP and the Office is now being implemented through a Regional Human Rights Programme Adviser based in southern Africa. The Adviser works closely with Governments and United Nations Resident Coordinators in the subregion with a view to advising and assisting-States on building national capacity for human rights and the rule of law.

26. Another notable development has recently resulted from discussions between the Office, the United Nations Centre for International Crime Prevention, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and others with a view to closely coordinating assistance in the area of the administration of juvenile justice. Those discussions produced detailed Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System, which were adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/30 of 21 July 1997, on the administration of juvenile justice. In that resolution the Council invited the Secretary-General to establish a coordination panel on technical advice and assistance in juvenile justice as foreseen in the guidelines. The panel is to consist of representatives of the Centre for International Crime Prevention, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, UNDP, other relevant United Nations organizations and interested regional and non-governmental organizations.

27. The High Commissioner is continuing the system-wide analysis of technical assistance provided by United Nations entities in areas related to human rights, democracy and the rule of law, which, with the cooperation of the various relevant United Nations entities, should be completed in 1998. The analysis will provide objective data necessary for the High Commissioner to identify areas of complementarity and duplication, to compare the competitive advantages and areas of focus of the various programmes and thereby to explore new modalities and synergies for the enhancement of system-wide support for the rule of law.

28. At the same time, direct consultations have been initiated between the High Commissioner and the World Bank, including on means to increase cooperation in rule of law development initiatives. Discussions at the headquarters level in this regard are being complemented by closer contacts at the field level, where rule of law projects are implemented.

29. The Office of the High Commissioner has also recently seconded staff specialized in this area to other United Nations offices for the purpose of coordinating rule of law assistance, most recently to the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories, where an adviser seconded by the High Commissioner worked with the Special Coordinator in coordinating a US$ 73 million rule of law development programme, involving 17 donors and 10 United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as the World Bank.

30. Each of these initiatives is ongoing and each has been accorded priority status by the High Commissioner in her efforts to improve the capacity of the Organization to support States seeking to promote the rule of law.

VIII. Policy and conclusions

31. The policy of the High Commissioner for Human Rights is to give priority to assisting developing countries (in particular the least developed countries) with a focus on countries in transition to democracy. Other important factors determining possible assistance that the Office provides to Member States at their request are: specific recommendations made by the United Nations human rights treaty bodies; recommendations by the Commission on Human Rights and its mechanisms, including the representatives of the Secretary-General, the special rapporteurs on thematic or country situations and the various working groups; the recommendations adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights (established pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1987/38); and the

views expressed by national human rights institutions and national and international NGOs.

32. The Office of the High Commissioner has recently initiated a process of discussion on aims and objectives for her office, which are to form the basis of its work programme for the medium term. Assistance in support of the rule of law figures prominently among those aims and objectives, as does the mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations system, the advancement of economic, social and cultural rights, and the promotion of the right to development.

33. This is not a coincidental set of unrelated goals, but rather a natural outgrowth of the growing recognition within the Organization that the four goals are inextricably linked. As cited in the third preambular paragraph of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a half-century ago, the rule of law is a vital element of conflict prevention. It remains, as well, the most effective guarantor of the realization of all human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social. It is widely recognized as a fundamental condition for sustainable human development. Support for the rule of law is thus a matter of relevance to each of the organizational units which collectively form the United Nations system.

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Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. Following a recommendation by the World Conference on Human Rights, the General Assembly, by its resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, proclaimed the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995–2004). The goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, culture, the environment, development, education and health. The theme of the Decade is "indigenous people: partnership in action."

2. In its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly adopted the programme of activities for the Decade. One of the main objectives of the Decade is the adoption by the General Assembly of a declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the further development of international standards and national legislation for the protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous people. Another major objective of the Decade is to further the implementation of the recommendations pertaining to indigenous people of all high-level international conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and, the World Conference on Human Rights, in particular its recommendation that consideration be given to the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system.

3. In its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly recommended that the objectives of the Decade should be assessed by quantifiable outcomes that would improve the lives of indigenous people and that could be evaluated halfway through the Decade (1999) and at its end (2004).

4. In its resolution 52/108, the General Assembly decided to appoint the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as coordinator for the Decade. The High Commissioner is requested to submit to the General Assembly, through the Secretary-General, reports on the implementation of the programme of activities of the Decade.

5. The General Assembly, by its resolution 52/108, decided to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-third session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

II. United Nations meetings

A. Commission on Human Rights

6. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission on Human Rights considered questions pertaining to indigenous people under the agenda item entitled "Indigenous issues". The Commission adopted three resolutions concerning indigenous people.

International Decade

7. With regard to the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, the Commission, *inter alia*, invited the United Nations institutions, programmes and specialized agencies to give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people within their areas of competence. The Commission also encouraged Governments to support the Decade in consultation with indigenous people by, *inter alia*, preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade and establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people.

Working group on the establishment of a permanent forum

8. The Commission decided to establish an open-ended ad hoc inter-sessional working group, from within existing overall resources, to elaborate and consider further proposals for the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system. Participation in the ad hoc working group will be in accordance with the same procedures agreed upon for the working group on a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people, established in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/32 and its annex.

Working group on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

9. The third session of the working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people was held in Geneva from 20 October to 7 November 1997. Ten of the 45 articles in the draft were discussed at the session in 1997. Two articles were adopted: article 5, which provides the right to all indigenous people to have a nationality; and article 43, which provides for gender equality. There was also broad consensus for the principles underlying articles 15 (educational rights); 16 (diversity and non-discrimination);

17 (information and media); and 18 (labour rights). The fourth session of the working group on the draft declaration is due to be held in Geneva from 12 to 23 October 1998.

B. Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities

10. At its fiftieth session, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities considered indigenous issues under the agenda item entitled "Human rights of indigenous peoples".

11. In the context of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People the Subcommission recommended that the Commission on Human Rights request the Economic and Social Council to authorize the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize a three-day technical meeting immediately prior to the seventeenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in order to undertake the mid-point review of the Decade, as requested in the General Assembly in resolutions 50/157 and 52/108. The Subcommission emphasized the importance of ensuring the greatest possible indigenous participation at such a technical meeting.

C. Working Group on Indigenous Populations

12. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations meets for one week immediately before the annual session of the Subcommission, in order to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people. The Working Group is also mandated to give special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous people.

13. At its sixteenth session, the Working Group, meeting in Geneva from 27 to 31 July 1998, considered 13 agenda items, including an item entitled "International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

14. The Working Group welcomed the comments and suggestions of participants relating to the International Decade and reaffirmed its willingness to assist the Coordinator of the Decade in the realization of the programme of activities of the Decade.

15. The Working Group expressed its gratitude for the contributions made by Governments and non-governmental organizations to the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade. It also called upon Governments that had not contributed to the Voluntary Fund to assist financially the activities of the Decade.

16. The Working Group recommended to its parent body, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, that it propose to the Commission on Human Rights that a three-day technical meeting take place prior to the seventeenth session of the Working Group, to undertake the mid-point review of the Decade, as recommended in General Assembly resolution 50/157.

17. The Working Group recommended that the celebration (in Geneva) of the International Day of the World's Indigenous People (9 August) be held during its seventeenth session in order to ensure as great as possible participation on the part of indigenous people.

III. Activities undertaken by the major actors in 1998

18. In its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly encouraged the United Nations system, Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other interested parties to support the Decade by adopting programmes and identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people.

A. Observance of the International Day

19. In its resolution 48/163, the General Assembly proclaimed 9 August as International Day of the World's Indigenous People. The General Assembly has requested a formal observance each year on the International Day, in New York, Geneva and other offices of the United Nations.

20. The fourth commemoration of the International Day was organized at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva. The International Day was marked at Headquarters by a sacred pipe ceremony and songs and dances honouring indigenous peoples of the world. Indigenous leaders and elders from around the world gathered for the commemoration. A panel discussion on land and natural resources was also held as part of the commemoration.

21. At the United Nations Office at Geneva, a half-day cultural event was organized by the Indigenous Fellowship Programme at the Office of the High Commissioner for

Human Rights, during the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Indigenous representatives from around the world shared their cultural expressions with the Working Group and other interested people. Several hundred indigenous and governmental representatives from all parts of the world participated in the commemoration.

22. In his message for the International Day, the Secretary-General said that the Day was an opportunity to reflect upon the diversity of indigenous cultures and reaffirm the international community's commitment to the world's indigenous people, wherever they live. He said that the Day provided an opportunity to raise public awareness about indigenous people's distinctive ways of life, languages, customs and traditions, and contribution to culture worldwide.

23. The Secretary-General said that the United Nations system was increasingly active in promoting the rights of indigenous people and developing programmes which would bring lasting benefits to indigenous communities. He said that international cooperation was firmly established as a policy framework under the theme of "Indigenous people: partnership in action". Furthermore, the Secretary-General stated that, in the anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we should reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that those rights were truly universal for all people of the world, including the world's indigenous people.

24. In her message, the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Coordinator of the Decade, focused on the principal theme of the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations: Indigenous people: education and language. She emphasized the fundamental importance of language and education for indigenous communities. She said that the unique languages of indigenous peoples were a source of unity and community. As for education, it had played and continued to play a significant role in opening opportunities for indigenous peoples in their efforts to be treated without discrimination.

25. The High Commissioner stated that the international community should renew its efforts to ensure access of indigenous peoples to all forms and levels of education. Furthermore, the international community should welcome and support the actions being taken by indigenous communities to take control once again of the destinies of their peoples.

B. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Indigenous Peoples Programme

26. An indigenous project team has been established within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that indigenous issues are dealt with in a consistent and comprehensive manner. The work carried out on indigenous issues constitutes an integrated cross-branch programme. The policy objectives, overall programme and priorities are developed bearing in mind the functional approach of the three branches within the Office of the High Commissioner.

27. The team is composed of two professional staff members; one regular staff member and one indigenous secondment funded since May 1996 by the Government of Norway.

28. The Governments of France and the Netherlands have pledged to second and fund a consultant and an associate expert, respectively, earmarked for the Indigenous Peoples Programme. The individuals to fill the posts have already been selected, and it is expected that both will take up their positions before the end of 1998.

Inter-Agency Consultation

29. The annual Inter-Agency Consultation on Indigenous People, held this year at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 24 July, was organized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. The meeting was attended by eight United Nations agencies. Five governmental observers took part in discussions related to funding of the activities of the Decade. Various issues were discussed, including ideas and proposals for improving the participation of indigenous people in United Nations activities.

Workshops/seminars

30. In its resolution 1996/34, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities recommended that the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights organize a workshop, with the participation of appropriate departments of the United Nations and other relevant institutions and persons, in order to improve the dissemination of information about the United Nations and its activities related to indigenous people. Accordingly, a workshop for indigenous journalists was held in Madrid, Spain, from 26 to 28 January 1998. It was funded by the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

31. The workshop adopted a programme to strengthen the indigenous media during the Decade. It was recommended, *inter alia*, that responsible organizations and institutions should develop training and educational activities for helping indigenous media workers improve their professional and technical skills and elaborate strategies for advocacy communication through training workshops, scholarships, internships and other initiatives.

32. At its fifty-fourth session, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to organize a seminar on the draft principles and guidelines for the protection of the heritage of indigenous people. The draft principles and guidelines are proposed by the Special Rapporteur, Prof. Erica-Irene A. Daes. The seminar is due to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva from 2 to 4 November 1998.

Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations

33. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations, established by the General Assembly in resolution 40/131, provides financial assistance to representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to enable them to attend sessions of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. In its resolution 50/156, the General Assembly decided that the Fund should also be used to assist representatives of indigenous communities and organizations to participate in the deliberations of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Fund is administered by a board of trustees. The five members, who all are indigenous individuals, are appointed by the Secretary-General.

34. At its meeting in Geneva from 30 March to 1 April 1998, the Board of Trustees awarded 50 travel grants (US$ 144,250) to indigenous representatives, to enable them to attend the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The Board also awarded three travel grants (US$ 11,126) to indigenous representatives attending the working group of the Commission on Human Rights on the draft declaration. However, around US$ 50,000 are still available in the Fund, and the Board recommended that the Secretariat invite indigenous organizations to continue to apply for travel grants for their participation in the Commission's working group. The extended deadline for applications was set for 31 July 1998. The Board will consider the applications by the end of August 1998. (See also the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Status of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations," also submitted under agenda item 110.)

Voluntary Fund for the International Decade

35. The Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, established by the General Assembly by resolution 49/214, provides financial assistance to indigenous projects and programmes during the Decade. An advisory group is appointed by the Secretary-General to assist the High Commissioner for Human Rights as coordinator of the Decade. The Advisory Group is composed of the members of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations and the Chairperson/Rapporteur of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

36. At its third session, held from 2 to 8 April 1998, the Advisory Group examined 43 applications for project grants, taking into consideration the selection criteria, the mandate of the Fund and the limited resources available (on the mandate of the Fund, see A/52/509 para. 27, E/CN.4/1998/107 and General Assembly resolutions 48/163, 49/214 and 50/157). The Group recommended that 13 project grants be awarded, for a total of US$ 139,016. The High Commissioner for Human Rights approved these recommendations.

37. The following projects were awarded a grant:

(a) Comisión Jurídica para el Autodesarrollo de los Pueblos Originarios Andino "Capaj": monthly edition of *Boletin Andino*, Peru, $3,600;

(b) Saqb'e Mayab' Moloj: publication of the children's newspaper *Kukuy*, Guatemala, $5,000;

(c) Asociación de Desarrollo Comunal Indigena Nahuat (ADESCOIN): rescue of the Nahuat language and support of the Nahuat School, El Salvador, $21,400;

(d) Asociación de Mujeres Agricultoras Indigenas de Cabagra y Bolas: creativity of women in human rights, non violence and Mother Earth, Costa Rica, $15,000;

(e) Mamalo Descendants organization: codification of traditional laws, the Timuway system of governance, Philippines, $10,000;

(f) Organization for Survival of Il-Laikipiak Indigenous Massai Group Initiatives (OSILIGI): organizational capacity-building strategy, Kenya, $10,000;

(g) Conseil national pour les droits du peuples autochtones de la Nouvelle Calédonie: elaboration of a charter of the Kanak people to enhance the recognition of indigenous rights, New Caledonia/France, $9,016;

(h) Comunidad Mapuche Nicolas Ailio: capacity-building of the community, Chile, $5,000;

(i) Chotanagpur Adivasi Sewa Samiti: building Adivasi people's organization for protection of their rights in the face of mining and displacement, India, $10,000;

(j) Association des femmes refugiées de l'Azouad au Burkina Faso (AFRAB): Educational project, Burkina Faso, $10,000;

(k) Scientific Research Centre for Forest-dependent and Aboriginal People: Information system, indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation and new mechanisms for the protection of their rights, Russian Federation, $15,000;

(l) Association pour la promotion des Batwa: Batwa Cultural Centre, Rwanda, $5,000;

(m) Comité nacional del Decenio de las poblaciones indígenas del mundo: functioning of the Mexican indigenous office, Mexico, $20,000.

38. The Advisory Group approved the principle of organizing a workshop of research institutes and institutions of higher education focusing on indigenous issues in education, as recommended by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 1997/32 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/108, for a total amount of about $60,000. Funds have to be raised for this purpose.

39. The Advisory Group noted with satisfaction that all the recommendations adopted at its second session had been implemented: work on the United Nations guide for indigenous peoples had started; the Workshop of Indigenous Journalists had been successfully organized in Madrid in January 1998, with the cooperation of the Government of Spain (E/CN.4/1998/107, paras. 14–16), and the Workshop on the Permanent Forum was held in Santiago, Chile (A/52/509, paras. 33–37).

40. Ten project grants for indigenous organizations, a grant for the organization of a seminar by the Government of Bolivia and a grant for a joint project with UNESCO, recommended and approved in 1997, were paid on 3 March 1998. The organizations have been requested to submit narrative and financial reports on the use of these grants by 30 September 1998.

41. Eleven project grants approved in 1998 for indigenous organizations have been paid. The narrative and financial reports on the use of these grants should be submitted by 1 December 1998.

42. From 1 December 1997 to 31 July 1998 the Fund received the following new contributions: Canada, $10,426 (9 December 1997); Cyprus, $1,000 (12 May 1998); Denmark, $146,886 (12 December 1997); Greece, $3,000 (14 April 1998); Japan, $50,000 (19 March 1998); Norway, $68,552 (30 December 1997); Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, 10,000 Australian dollars (26 June 1998). The annex lists contributions received since 1996 by the Fund.

43. Almost all of the resources available to the Fund were allocated to the above-mentioned activities in 1998, continuation of the Indigenous Fellowship Programme for four fellows for six months, and the holding of the third session of the Advisory Group.

44. After allocation of the funds at the third session, according to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, about $16,000 was left in the Fund. As at 31 July 1998, with new contributions, a total amount of $70,129 was available, not including a contribution made by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and before deducting programme support costs and the operating cash reserve. This amount is not sufficient for new activities in 1999 to be carried out by the Secretariat or upon recommendation of the Advisory Group.

45. An estimated amount of $500,000 would be necessary to cover activities provisionally envisaged for 1999.

Indigenous fellowship programme

46. In the annex to its resolution 50/157, the General Assembly recommended that an indigenous fellowship programme be created within the United Nations to assist indigenous people gain experience of the United Nations system. In 1997 the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Coordinator of the Decade set aside funds from the Trust Fund for the Decade to cover costs of a pilot fellowship programme. The fellowship includes travel to Geneva, accommodation, health insurance, and a monthly grant to cover other expenses.

47. The aim of the programme is to give indigenous individuals the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in the field of international human rights, in general, and on indigenous rights, in particular, in order to assist their organizations and communities in promoting and protecting the human rights of their people. The programme is designed for indigenous individuals, supported by their organizations and communities, who are committed to the understanding and promotion of international human rights and the process of development and implementation of international human rights standards.

48. The Indigenous Fellowship Programme of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for 1998 runs from 1 June to 30 November in Geneva. Four indigenous individuals, Ms. Saoudata Aboubacrine (Mali);

Mr. Estebancio Castro Diaz (Panama); Ms. Tracey Te Aroha Whare (New Zealand); and Ms. Jennifer Williams (United States), were awarded fellowships in 1998. One indigenous individual from Canada, Ms. Tracy McHugh, was accepted as a self-funded fellow, her participation being funded by her own organization, the Assembly of First Nations.

C. The United Nations system

49. In July 1998, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) organized a round table on Indigenous Intellectual Property. The round table sought to facilitate an exchange of views and information concerning the protection of traditional indigenous knowledge, innovations and culture; allow for full and effective participation by the participating indigenous groups; and enable participants to listen to and learn from representatives of indigenous people and local communities as to their needs and expectations.

50. In 1998 WIPO launched a programme of activities relating to the identification and exploration of new approaches to the use of the intellectual property system by the world's indigenous peoples, local communities and other holders, custodians and creators of traditional knowledge. The programme of activities is being carried out primarily by the new Global Intellectual Property Issues Division, which has, as part of its duties, the exploration and investigation of the needs and expectations of potential new beneficiaries of intellectual property. Indigenous peoples, local communities and holders and creators of traditional knowledge have been identified by WIPO as the first group of potential new beneficiaries.

51. At its fourth meeting, the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity adopted a resolution on the implementation of article 8 (j) and related provisions of the Convention. It is stated in article 8 (j), *inter alia*, that States shall, as far as possible and as appropriate, respect preserve and maintain knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.

52. The Conference of the Parties decided that an ad hoc open-ended inter-sessional working group be established to address the implementation of article 8 (j) and related provisions of the Convention. The working group is reporting directly to the Conference of the Parties.

53. The mandate of the working group is to:

(a) Provide advice on the application and development of legal and other appropriate forms of protection for the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities embodying traditional lifestyles relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity;

(b) Provide the Conference of the Parties with advice relating to the implementation of article 8 (j) and related provisions, in particular on the development and implementation of a programme of work at national and international levels;

(c) Develop a programme of work, based on the structure of the elements in the Madrid report (UNEP/CBD/COP/4/10/Add.1);

(d) Identify those objectives and activities falling within the scope of the Convention and recommend priorities, taking into account the medium-term programme of work of Conference of the Parties;

(e) Provide advice to the Conference of the Parties on measures to strengthen cooperation at the international level among indigenous and local communities and make proposals for the strengthening of mechanisms that support such cooperation.

54. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is supporting and participating in the Indigenous Knowledge Programme, together with the International Development Research Centre, the Swiss Cooperation, and the Governments of Norway and Denmark. The Programme is an initiative of the Indigenous People Biodiversity Network. The Steering Committee of the Programme is comprised of a general coordinator and eight regional coordinators, all representatives of local indigenous organizations.

55. The UNDP Partners in Development Programme (PDP) has several projects which focus on indigenous people. The Governments of Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Philippines have explicitly dedicated their PDP-II projects to support for indigenous people, while others, such as the Governments of Bolivia, Bhutan, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal, provide indirect support. PDP provides project grants to organizations of indigenous people.

56. In July 1998, UNDP supported an interregional workshop of the International Alliance of the Indigenous and Tribal People of the Tropical Forests, with a financial contribution of $50,000.

57. In its resolution WHA51.24 of May 1998, the World Health Assembly urges its member States to develop and implement national plans of action or programmes on indigenous peoples' health. Furthermore, it requests the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO)

to promote the inclusion of indigenous health in its work programme at the country, regional and global level.

58. WHO is currently developing a programme of action for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, in consultation with national Governments and indigenous organizations. In 1995, WHO created an Indigenous People Substance Use Project whose overall aim is to assist in the healthy development of indigenous people and communities through the prevention and minimization to individual, family and community of problems related to the use of, production of, trafficking in and supplying of psychoactive substances (alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and substances which people use and when ingested produces a change in mental processes and behaviour). The Project focuses on preventing the harmful use of psychoactive substances and minimizing any harm already occurring.

59. WHO has ongoing activities in such areas as quality-of-life assessment, traditional medicine, substance abuse, the mental health of indigenous peoples.

60. The International Labour Organization (ILO) approach in the area of indigenous and tribal peoples falls within two major areas: supervision of the two conventions relating to indigenous and tribal peoples, and the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention No. 107 (1957) and the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention No. 169 (1989), and technical assistance. Convention No. 107 is closed for ratification but remains valid for those countries that have ratified it. Ratifications of Convention No. 169, which revises Convention No. 107, continue to be received. The total number of ratifications as of August 1998 is 13, with ratifications from Ecuador, Fiji and the Netherlands received during the past year.

61. Since the beginning of the International Decade, the ILO has initiated a number of technical cooperation projects and programmes to increase awareness of the situation of indigenous and tribal peoples and to promote improvements in their living and working conditions. All ILO technical assistance programmes are implemented within the framework of relevant ILO standards, in particular Convention No. 169.

62. The ILO Project to Promote ILO Policy on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples, which began operation in 1996, is a technical cooperation project financed by DANIDA. The Project is managed by two indigenous and tribal persons, and has, since its inception in 1996, cooperated with Governments, trade unions and others to draw attention to the situation of indigenous and tribal peoples, with an emphasis on Asia and southern Africa. The ILO's Interregional Programme to Support Self-Reliance of Indigenous and Tribal Communities through Cooperatives and other Self-Help Organizations (INDISCO), which began operation in 1993 under an ILO/DANIDA programme for cooperative development in rural areas, is designed especially to assist indigenous and tribal peoples. INDISCO has a number of pilot projects in India and the Philippines, and operations are just beginning in Belize, Viet Nam and Thailand.

63. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized an Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, in Stockholm, Sweden, from 30 March to 2 April 1998. During the Conference, a seminar on Indigenous Cultural Rights was organized by UNESCO, in cooperation with an indigenous organization, the Saami Council.

64. The World Bank is currently working on its approach paper on revision of its operational document (OD 4.20) on indigenous peoples, which was issued in 1991. The document emphasizes the need for indigenous peoples to participate in and benefit from Bank-financed development projects. It also outlines special procedures for incorporating the concerns of indigenous peoples into Bank-financed investments through the design of indigenous peoples development plans. The Bank is currently reviewing all of its operational policies, in an effort to improve its menu of policies and ensure greater compliance, especially with safeguard policies. Safeguard policies establish minimum standards that all Bank country departments and task teams must comply with in their investment decisions and operations.

D. Regional organizations

65. The Directorate General for Development of the European Commission organized a workshop on indigenous people and development cooperation, in Brussels from 12 to 13 March 1998. The workshop was organized as part of the ongoing process of preparing a European policy on indigenous people and development cooperation. The aim is to address development cooperation, not to develop a general European policy on indigenous peoples. However, the policy will establish basic principles for cooperation with indigenous peoples and integrate the theme in the general work of the European Community.

E. Member States

66. The Government of New Zealand hosted the Third "Healing our Spirit" Worldwide Conference in February 1998. The aim of the Healing our Spirit conferences is to provide a forum for indigenous people worldwide to network and share resources, research and information associated with the prevention and treatment of ill health relating to psychoactive substances. The objective is to promote the healthy development of indigenous people and communities from developed and developing countries.

67. The Government of Spain hosted the Workshop for Indigenous Journalists, held in Madrid in January 1998. Matters such as indigenous issues in the mainstream press, Strengthening the indigenous media, and Indigenous journalists and the United Nations, were discussed at the workshop.

68. An International Training Centre of Indigenous People has been established at the Katuaq Cultural Centre, Nuuk, Greenland. The Centre is offering intensive and comprehensive summer training courses to indigenous people around the world. It is envisaged as an independent educational resource dedicated to increasing the capacity of indigenous people for effective work in national and international affairs.

69. The Government of Japan has initiated programmes with the goal of improving the lives of the Ainu people in all fields, including areas such as education, culture, environment and economy. The Government of Japan has enacted a law for the promotion of the Ainu culture and for the dissemination and advocacy of the traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu culture. For the purpose of implementing the law, the Government of Japan has allocated a sum equivalent to $2.33 million in the current fiscal year.

70. In May 1998, the Government of Estonia adopted a programme for Uralic indigenous peoples. The main areas covered are culture, education and information. Ten million Estonian Krooni (equivalent to $700,000) will be allocated annually , from 1999 to 2004, for the implementation of the programme. Furthermore, in order to enable 30 indigenous Uralic indigenous students to start or continue their studies at Tartu University, the Government has allocated 1.6 million Estonian Krooni (about $116,000) in 1998.

71. The Government of Australia is giving priority to addressing the disadvantaged state of indigenous people in key socio-economic areas. Increased funds have been allocated for improving the health conditions of indigenous people. There are also a number of recent initiatives aimed at increasing the literacy and numeracy skills of indigenous students.

72. In January 1998, the Government of Canada released its response to the Royal Commission's report on aboriginal peoples. The response, entitled "Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan", aims to help local governments, aboriginal people, the private sector and others work together to find and implement solutions to problems faced by indigenous peoples. The Government of Canada has made a statement of reconciliation in which it expresses regret for the many past policies and actions that have eroded the political, economic and social systems of aboriginal people and nations. A sum of 350 million Canadian dollars has been allocated to develop a community-based healing strategy to assist aboriginal people who were the victims of physical and sexual abuse in residential schools. Progress has also been made in discussions pertaining to indigenous self-government. A number of final self-government agreements have recently been signed, and the Government is currently engaged in 85 separate self-government negotiations across the country, involving over one half of Canada's First Nations and Inuit communities.

73. In New Zealand, changes to the electoral system have led to significantly increased Maori political representation. A special provision is made in the Electoral Act for Maori Representation in Parliament. Maori have the option of enroling on either the Maori electoral roll or the general roll. The Maori unemployment rate remains significantly higher than that of non-Maori, and the Government has therefore put in place employment initiatives specially aimed at Maori. The Government of New Zealand has developed a strategy to encourage economic development for Maori in the tourism industry. The Government's education strategy focuses on identifying how the educational system can be more responsive to the needs of Maori, in order to further the goal of achieving educational parity between Maori and non-Maori. The Government has established four Maori commissions, covering health, education, employment and training, and economic employment. Furthermore, a number of activities within the framework of the Decade is focusing on capacity-building.

74. The Government of Brazil has demarcated 11 per cent of the Brazilian territory to indigenous peoples. The Government reports that it deployed every reasonable effort to speed up the process of demarcation of indigenous lands in 1998. A new education policy has been adopted, in accordance with new Constitutional requirements. The policy takes into account the fact that there are 170 indigenous languages and dialects in Brazil, spoken by around 400,000 persons. Special attention is therefore paid

to the fact that those indigenous peoples have their own forms of teaching and learning, based on oral transmission of collective as well as individual knowledge. In June 1998, the Government signed an agreement on the creation of the Indigenous Peoples Development Fund for Latin-America and the Caribbean (Fondo para el Desarollo de los Pueblos Indigenas de America Latina y del Caribe).

75. The Government of the United States of America reports that the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs has budgeted approximately $17.2 million for bilingual education for around 28,000 indigenous students from kindergarten through grade 12 during fiscal year 1998.

76. The Government of Norway reports that for the first time in history a separate integrated Sami curriculum has been designed for the compulsory education system (primary and lower secondary school). It is an integrated curriculum which does not involve supplementary curricula for individual subjects. It is based upon the belief that the Sami language and culture are part of a heritage which Norway has a special responsibility to safeguard.

F. Indigenous organizations

77. In February 1998, Asociacion Napguana, an indigenous organization in Panama, organized an international indigenous conference on the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system. The conference was held in Kuna Yala, Panama, from 3 to 6 March 1998. Participants discussed issues such as the United Nations system and the possible functions of a permanent forum; the mandate, level and composition of a permanent forum; and participation and membership.

78. The Saami Council, in cooperation with UNESCO, organized a seminar on indigenous cultural rights in Stockholm, Sweden. The seminar was a side-event of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, held in Stockholm from 30 March to 2 April 1998.

IV. Final observations

79. In its resolution 50/157 the General Assembly invited the United Nations financial and development institutions, operational programmes and specialized agencies to give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of those people in developing countries, *inter alia*, by the preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence; launch special projects, through appropriate channels and in collaboration with indigenous people, for strengthening their community-level initiatives, and facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among indigenous people and other relevant experts; and designate focal points, for coordination with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, for activities related to the Decade.

80. The General Assembly emphasized the importance of action at the national level. Governments were encouraged to support the Decade by contributing to the Voluntary Fund for the Decade; preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people; seeking means, in consultation with indigenous people, of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters which affect them; establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with indigenous people.

81. Gratitude is expressed to the donors of contributions for the Voluntary Fund for the Decade. New donors are encouraged to contribute for the first time, and former donors are encouraged to contribute on a regular basis and, if possible, to increase their contributions.

82. In its resolutions 50/157 and 52/108, the General Assembly expresses the view that the objectives of the Decade should be assessed by quantifiable outcomes which can be evaluated halfway through the Decade and at its end.

83. At the sixteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the Greenland Home Rule Government and the Sami Parliaments in Finland, Norway and Sweden proposed holding a technical meeting immediately prior to the seventeenth session of the Working Group, in order to undertake a review of the Decade and suggest possible changes to its programme of activities. This proposal has been endorsed by many indigenous organizations.

84. An evaluation of the first five years of the Decade is important in making the rest of the Decade a success. The existing programme of activities for the Decade should therefore be examined and adjusted on the basis of the experiences of the first five years.

Annex

Contributions to the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People[a]

Donor	*Amount in US$*	*Paid in New York or Geneva*	*Paid on*
Australia	31 920	Geneva	14.05.1996
Canada	11 095	Geneva	23.01.1996
	10 799	Geneva	04.03.1997
	10 426	Geneva	09.12.1997
Cyprus	1 485	New York	15.04.1996
	1 000	Geneva	12.05.1998
Denmark	168 186	Geneva	07.01.1997
	146 886	Geneva	12.12.1997
Fiji	3 000	New York	09.01.1997
Greece	3 000	Geneva	09.05.1996
	3 000	Geneva	03.06.1997
	3 000	Geneva	14.04.1998
Japan	50 000	New York	30.04.1996
	50 000	New York	31.03.1997
	50 000	New York	19.03.1998
Norway	68 552	Geneva	30.12.1997
New Zealand	16 680	New York	22.04.1996
	6 779	New York	16.07.1996
Sweden	61 633	Geneva	14.08.1997
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission	7 976	Geneva	15.05.1996
	7 408[b]	Geneva	02.07.1997
		Geneva	26.06.1998
Alliance of Taiwan Indigenous Culture	300	Geneva	22.10.1997
Intuition Music, Inc. DBA Sequoia Records	25	Geneva	14.02.1996
	25	Geneva	01.03.1996
	25	Geneva	15.03.1996
	50	Geneva	06.05.1996
	50	Geneva	15.05.1996
	50	Geneva	26.07.1996
	50	Geneva	22.08.1996
	100	Geneva	08.11.1996
	50	Geneva	10.12.1996
	50	Geneva	23.12.1996
	150	Geneva	18.02.1997
	50	Geneva	04.07.1997
	50	Geneva	14.04.1997
	50	Geneva	09.05.1997
	50	Geneva	19.06.1997
	50	Geneva	25.08.1997
	50	Geneva	18.09.1997
	50	Geneva	16.10.1997
	50	Geneva	19.11.1997
	50	Geneva	09.12.1997
	50	Geneva	06.02.1998
	50	Geneva	13.03.1998
	50	Geneva	25.03.1998
	50	Geneva	01.05.1998

Donor	*Amount in US$*	*Paid in New York or Geneva*	*Paid on*
E. Stamatopoulou	800	Geneva	05.01.1996

[a] Contributions received from 1 January 1996 to 31 July 1998, based on official receipts available at UNHCHR.

[b] 10,000 Australian dollars. Amount in United States dollars is not yet available.